

**The role of social and cultural capital in choice
making for post secondary school destinations:
The case of contemporary Cyprus**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the choices that students coming from different social backgrounds and from the full range of secondary schools in Cyprus make regarding their post school destinations. It is based on a theory, which regards the family as a central agency in the reproduction of inequalities. This study argues that apart from making the most of their financial capital, Cypriot families utilise intentionally or in an unintended manner the non-monetary capitals they may have available such as their cultural capital and more importantly their social capital to produce social 'profits' for the education of their offspring. Social capital is seen as a major factor that can explain the unequal pattern of educational choices made by the growing ranks of students coming from different social origins regarding their post school destinations. Different families adopt various strategies to cope with the lack of that resource and it appears that some families have more options to consider than others. The differential ability to cope with the lack of social capital constitutes a source of social differentiation. The mobilisation of various resources is examined in a social environment whereby for the past three or four decades went through a process of modernisation. This rapid transition has led to the co-existence of traditional and modernist perspectives of how social relations and gender issues are perceived. Adherence to one or another perspective affects the strategies that families employ for their children's educational prospects.

This research used a multiple or mixed method approach combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a complimentary manner. A stratified sample of 404 students graduating from all kinds of secondary schools and their parents completed questionnaires. A selected sample of 24 parents was interviewed. The findings of the study indicate that choice making varies across social class and is influenced by gender. Of the non-monetary resources investigated social capital appears to act as a hidden mechanism of social selection in modern Cyprus particularly because it allows for the creation of a certain habitus that allows some privileged families and students mostly from middle class backgrounds to make far reaching and daring decisions which offer them the possibility for social success in a competitive and 'close' labour market whereas at the same time it makes others from lower social class backgrounds to make 'pragmatic' choices which often mean making compromises in their ambitions to achieve social success.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

This study is about young people's choices in education and how they affect processes of social reproduction in contemporary Cyprus. In particular, it focuses on the social mechanisms that constitute the frameworks within which students make their choices at the end of their secondary schooling and their aspirations for future employment and occupational status. This research aims to identify the processes whereby students follow various directions in relation to higher education. More importantly though, it is connected with why students choose to aim at one kind of higher education rather than another. Are these choices made 'freely' based entirely on natural abilities and attributes in relation to inclinations or are there structuring factors and constraints that affect the ability to make choices? Further, are such constraints likely to be influencing the ambitions and the aspirations of young people in ways, which are patterned according to their gender and social class background?

This chapter presents the rationale for this study. It includes some background information to the study, the setting and the research objectives. Also, it explains the importance of this study; in other words what it hopes to contribute to interested parties. It closes with the presentation of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background of the study

My personal interest in this area of research emanates from a desire and need to investigate and make sense of my own trajectory within the educational system and the choices that I made in relation to my own educational and occupational outcomes. I lived my childhood in a predominantly working class area of Limassol¹ where I attended secondary school. My family background is mainly working class. My grandfather from my father's side was a builder and part time farmer and my grandfather from my mother's side was a farmer who later became a village coffee shop owner. Both my grandmothers were housewives who also helped their

¹ The second largest town of Cyprus, the main industrial and export centre of the island with a population of around 110 000.

husbands. Most of my uncles and aunts are engaged in working class jobs and a few are employed in the service sector in lower middle class jobs. My father was the notable exception being the only one to attend post secondary education and becoming a primary school teacher.

Having graduated from one of the most demanding specialisations of the public Lyceum with the highest grades, I never felt comfortable with my decision to follow a career as a primary school teacher. The fact that I did not feel comfortable with it was not because I ever considered the teaching profession as being of less importance and value compared to other professions. My father was a primary school teacher for over 30 years and later a primary school Head-Teacher and I have acquired a lasting respect for this occupation, partly as a result of his example. Also, I was not particularly concerned with the fact that I was entering a profession that had progressively become a female dominated profession (nearly 80 percent of the intake are now females). It was more the fact that during my secondary education I always endeavoured to achieve the highest possible grades and in the end I felt that in making that particular choice, I was somehow compromising my ambitions. I was not alone. Many of my classmates who were also high achievers chose to follow what I later began to suspect they saw as the 'secure' path of primary school teaching. I subsequently began to ask myself what were the factors that made us all make the choices that we did? Were our choices made rationally based on calculating the expected results and benefits (e.g. secure employment and a steady income), as many would have had us believe? Was it that simple, or were there structural forces in society that indirectly encouraged us in that direction as being the most sensible choice to be made?

The above questions take us directly to the 'classic' sociological debates about what determines social action, which Giddens (1997), to take one of many possible writers on these themes, characterises as embodied in one of the central theoretical dilemmas that sociological theory faces today. At the centre of so much sociological theory there is disagreement among structuralists on the one hand, who argue that human behaviour is controlled to a large extent by the structures of the society we live in, and the social action theorists who argue that people act "freely" in that they base

their actions on the interpretations and meanings that they give to situations and choose to act accordingly. We will return to these issues at several points.

It is widely accepted today that investing in education and particularly, in the education of children, is a strategy with which families try to, at least, retain their social status, and where possible further enhance it. A crucial period in the education of children when this is determined and can be clearly observed is at the point where choices are being made regarding post school destinations. This is when discernible differentiation takes place, which leads to alternative life paths. Here, one may rightly argue that differentiation occurs earlier in education as well, for example when choices are being made as to the kind of secondary education students follow. This is very true, as these earlier choices influence considerably subsequent choices made in education. However, while this point is to be taken into consideration in the present study, the central focus is on the processes of choice-making at the end of secondary schooling regarding where to go next. Namely, whether to move into different kinds of higher education or whether to move into the field of paid employment.

A crucial cultural aspect of this research is the fact that education has always been regarded as a central issue in the Greek-speaking world. This has been true for the lives of Cypriots of each period for different kinds of reasons. In earlier periods of the agrarian society, the educated people were very few. In the smaller communities and towns the educated people were highly esteemed. Peasants looked upon the most educated (primary school teachers, the priests and the bishops) as their natural guides and leaders during the periods of the foreign occupations by, firstly, the Ottomans and subsequently, the British. The educated played a crucial role in an effort to guard and maintain their “Hellenic” identity (Persiannis, 1972). Also, because the social structure in the agrarian society was quite flexible, in the sense that there was not a complicated class structure among the indigenous population (the ruling classes consisted of the foreign rulers), education constituted the opportunity for some kind of social mobility through providing access to some non-manual ‘white collar’ jobs (e.g. primary school teacher) and thus to higher standards of living. As the years went by and education was expanding, people continued to seek more education and especially higher education for its utilitarian value. Better education seemed to lead to better standards of living and social mobility for a large number of peasants. Thus,

in Bourdieu's terms, credentialised cultural capital, represented in the form of academic qualifications, became a major symbol and determinant of wealth, status and power. Education was thought to be a means by which individuals could attain higher social status and a better-paid position in the world of work. This led to a competition for accumulation of diplomas and qualifications/credentials that could be used in the field of competition for status. Eventually, a situation has emerged whereby today there is a surplus of people with academic qualifications (Industrial Training Authority of Cyprus, 1997).

Thus, today, more than in any other period in the history of Cyprus, young people are seeking some kind of tertiary education. At the same time, higher education appears to be more accessible than ever before. This raises interesting issues of social justice. It may be the case that, today, the possible source of a lack of equity may not just lie in exclusion from higher education as many previous studies have overwhelmingly pointed out. It could be the case that injustices occur because of the unequal pattern of opportunity to make unfettered choices as a result of particular structures that are currently present in the Cypriot society.

The problematics of modernisation are significant here. As the Cypriot society modernises, social classes, social relations and gender issues are transformed. Social relations shift to 'modern' structures and the way the roles of men and women in society are perceived change. It is a familiar finding in Sociology of Education (Hodkinson, and Sparkes, 1997, Reay, 1998) that the growing ranks of students, male and female, coming from families with different socio-cultural characteristics have different options available, resulting in distinctly different social outcomes. In these terms, while this study assumes that social class and gender are expected to play an important role in the life chances of an individual, the focus is on the processes and structures which constitute the structuring of choices which lead to these familiar patterns.

A commonplace notion is that the family constitutes a crucial institution and agent in the production of social and cultural differences. This is especially so in a society such as Cyprus where the family is still considered to be very cohesive (Christodoulou, 1995). Families possess a certain position in the class structure and

this position provides its members with certain material and symbolic resources. These resources take the form of what we will refer to in this study as *economic*, *cultural* and *social capitals*. The importance of economic capital is rarely doubted and in some respects can easily be understood. Thus our particular interest will be to focus the investigation on the two latter non-monetary forms of capital in order to examine the role that they play in influencing positively or negatively the life chances of young individuals. These resources are what families ‘use’, either intentionally or benefit from in an unintentional manner to maintain, to defend and even enhance their social standings.

Thus, from what was mentioned above it can be acknowledged that this research was influenced to a great extent by those perspectives, which regard the family as crucial in the reproduction of social differences. This study, however, takes a different stand from those psychologists, for instance, who argue that the family atmosphere and the inter parent/children relations (that is if there is a democratic atmosphere in a family) determine the decisions that are taken for future destinations. This is by no means an attempt to disregard such claims, and we acknowledge that they do provide an insight into the process of how these decisions are being taken. However, this line of argument will tend to overlook the wider social dynamics in the society and the social and cultural environment within which these decisions are taken. These wider social dynamics in the society provide insights into situations whereby, for example, some students considered to be high achievers by their parents and teachers alike, set lower goals than their academic abilities would otherwise allow them to set. Why are such decisions made when we have the rhetoric, which embodies the *common sense* notion that high achievement through education leads to social mobility and success? Considerations such as

- the family and its resources
- the social and cultural dynamics in the society
- attitudes towards processes of social advancement and towards gender issues
- the influence of the above in choice making in education

form the background and provide the rationale for this study. We now turn to present the setting where this research takes place and to discuss the importance of this study to interested parties.

1.2 The setting

The setting of this study is Cyprus, a small island country in the Eastern Mediterranean. The investigation of this study takes place in the context of the Greek Cypriot community of the island, in what many have come to regard as a *modernising* society. The process of modernisation is seen as having serious consequences in the way choices are made in education because of changes in the ways of thinking of contemporary Greek Cypriots, in how they perceive the whole gamut of social relations, including gender issues and their relations to the ever engaging issues of how social advancement can be achieved.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the vast majority of the Cypriot population were small-scale farmers residing mostly in rural areas and were totally reliant on the agrarian economy. Most of the population were illiterate and there were only a few schools providing mostly basic education to a minority of children. Throughout the first decades of the century the educational system (especially primary education) came under the British colonial administration and expanded considerably. As a result the illiteracy rate began to fall and more young people stayed on longer in school. Education played a central role in raising the population's living standards. It also, provided a legitimate route for upward social mobility for a large proportion of the population as the occupational structure was transformed.

The second half of the twentieth century marked a period of unprecedented changes in the social structures, the economy and the social life of the country. Many of these changes were the product of the inevitable journey that the country underwent towards modernisation, in line with international trends and external influences. Other changes, however, were the products of political events the peak of which was the events of 1974. The Turkish invasion and occupation of the northern part of Cyprus led to the displacement of over 200,000 people. Greek Cypriots were forced to move to the southern part of the island whereas Turkish Cypriots gathered to the northern part of the island. The uprooting of Greek Cypriot villagers from their rural communities led to an intensification of the urbanisation in the southern part of the island.

Throughout the period after World War II, educational opportunities expanded dramatically and had a major influence, not only on the changing social relations in the society but also in the economic sphere and political life. School expansion was so broad that it increased social class participation at all levels of education particularly the lower levels (primary and lower secondary). Whether this expansion reduced class inequalities at the higher level of education remains to be seen. Could it be the case, that education expansion has been successful in reducing socio-economic influences at the lower levels of educational transitions but at the higher levels socially advantaged groups are still being favoured? In other words, as Wong (1998) remarks, it could be the case that school expansion did not so much reduce but postpone class selection in education till later stages, namely to the point of upper secondary and higher levels of education.

1.3 The importance of the present study

This study aims to challenge the rhetoric that unquestioningly advocates that the educational system is fair and that it offers the same opportunities to everybody. The educational system and the schools do not operate independently of the society. They are embedded within and influenced by it. In fact, it can be said that they are the products of the society within which they function. So, it can be argued that post school destination choices and the aspirations of students are influenced by the wider dynamics of the society. The problem and focus is to identify the structural factors within the Cypriot society that, on the one hand limit the ability of some students and their families to make ambitious choices, and on the other hand facilitate the choices that other students and their families make regarding their future destinations. This study sets out to provide descriptions and analysis to support an explanation of how social inequalities tend to be sustained, and indeed widened, thus contributing to the debate that surrounds identification of ways to make the Cypriot society more just.

In these terms, studying the structures and processes of post school destination choices is a practical way to study the issue of the dynamics of social reproduction and this is an attempt to shed some light on this process. The focus of this study coincides with one of the most recently expressed concerns of Cypriots, namely, the

growing apprehension about the increasing inequalities in the Cypriot society and the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor (*Kyprovarometro*, 1999). This study aims to add to these efforts that are directed towards a better understanding of how inequalities are being sustained and how education is part of this process. It attempts to challenge the official rhetoric that is being widely advocated in Cyprus, that through educational achievement leading to desired destinations schools perform the function of meritocratic selection. If it can only be a small contribution towards this aim then it should undoubtedly fulfil a goal, which is both modest and ambitious.

The implications and the importance of this study are evident for issues of social justice and concern a wide range of people involved with education in Cyprus. Issues concerning inequalities in the distribution of social, economic and cultural resources, educational inequality and the problem of unemployment among young people are always timely and crucial for social relations in every society. So, people such as educationalists, educational administrators, students, parents as well as politicians responsible for introducing or influencing the shaping of educational policies will hopefully benefit from looking at the results and the arguments that this study is going to make. It aims to offer a sociological perspective in the examination of these social processes and to offer an insight into the current state of social justice in contemporary Cyprus.

So, by investigating the mechanisms that influence educational processes this research aims to offer a better understanding of complex social issues relating to social justice. Hence, it intends to make contributions at two levels at least. At a micro level, it aims to inform and encourage people with social disadvantages (as much as possible) to challenge and question the authority of those 'institutions' that limit their opportunities for choices and forces them to compromise their ambitions. At a macro level, it hopes to be a well founded and informed voice of criticism by drawing attention to a situation that deprives a society from benefiting by making use of the total potential of its members. Developing its people and especially its younger generation is the best investment a country with limited natural resources can make, or so we are told (Christodoulou, 1995). If young people and their families are free from different social constraints to make informed choices based primarily on their abilities, preferences and inclinations and develop their potentials to the maximum.

then this investment would be truly one that would produce optimal positive results for a society and a country, such as contemporary Cyprus, in desperate need of assurances about its future prospects.

1.4 Research objectives

The central objective is to investigate the social patterns of aspirations and ambitions of contemporary Greek Cypriot students graduating from secondary education and the choices that they make for post school destinations. In particular, this study seeks to investigate:

- How do students coming from different socio-economic backgrounds make their choices regarding their post secondary education destinations?
- What are the underlying mechanisms that influence this choice making?
- What determines the level of aspiration that students set for their futures?
- How do family resources as well as parents' attitudes towards gender issues and social achievement influence choice making in education?

These general research objectives will be refined in view of the theoretical background/framework that is developed in the next three chapters, to form specific research questions/hypothesis. These, in turn will direct us to an empirical investigation in which appropriate methods and techniques will be selected to search for suitable data to address them.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Below, I present the key components of the organisation of the presentation of this study. Chapter 2 provides the general theoretical and conceptual framework. This framework addresses chiefly two main areas. First, it discusses the general issue of how choice making in education may be studied. Then it discusses the significance of non-monetary resources that may potentially influence educational outcomes.

The presentation of the specific social setting of contemporary Cyprus follows in Chapter 3. This is important because it provides a socio-historical contextual

framework for understanding those social structures that influence and shape the processes of choice making in education. This chapter provides a brief outline of the development of the Cypriot society and its transition from a traditional society to a society that exhibits many characteristics found in more developed societies. Also, it presents the development of the educational system in Cyprus during this transition period to its present state.

In Chapter 4 the role of the Cypriot family and its resources are examined within the context of a changing society. This is the environment within which modern Cypriots perceive social class and gender issues. In this environment, I examine the way social relations issues are perceived. This lays the foundations for the focus of this research and makes fully explicit the questions that this study sets out to answer.

The general rationale for the research strategy and the selection of the particular methods and research tools that were selected to provide empirical data and modes of analysis to answer these questions, then follows in Chapter 5, where the main methodological issues are also discussed.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present the findings of the empirical investigation.

In Chapter 9 what has been achieved by this research is addressed. The main findings are presented in the light of what this research set out to answer and then it moves on to discuss more general issues and implications. Some reflective observations and discussion of the limitations of the research are also presented, and some suggestions for possible research projects that could complement and take further the issues under investigation, are proposed.

Chapter 2:

The theoretical and conceptual framework of the study: Making choices in education

2.1 Introduction

The central focus of this study, namely the interconnected processes of decision-making regarding an individual's future educational and occupational destinations and their implications for understanding how these choice-making processes connect directly with processes of social reproduction, may be approached in several ways. The present aim is to describe and explain the particular approach adopted here. This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. This is done through the presentation and critical review of theoretical ideas and concepts as proposed by established theorists, leading to their integration with particular specifications to constitute the conceptual framework within which this study will proceed.

This chapter begins with an examination of the importance of looking at decision making in education and how it can be approached theoretically. Then it moves to the examination of non-monetary forms of *capital*, which are considered to play a crucial role in choice making in education.

2.2 Choice making regarding future educational and occupational outcomes

Central to the focus of our formulation of the theoretical framework of this study is to address the vital role of the family and its resources, which are seen as shaping the immediate context, as well as the wider relations within which educational choices are made in 'modern' Cyprus. Family resources may include a variety of entities and processes. Primarily they consist of financial resources but they may also include other non-monetary resources such as knowledge, social relationships and social contacts that can be of potential use in providing access to social goods such as support, encouragement and access to opportunities for their expansion and

application. Other non-monetary resources may include the possession of the knowledge of how the educational system works, the ability to cope with the demands of schooling and the ability to make use of all the potential that the education system has to offer¹. The way family resources are used, invested or mobilised are examined in relation to different structural ‘elements’² that constitute a space for individuals and their families to act, a framework for action for making, for example, choices regarding post secondary school destinations. In other words this chapter presents the argument for a theory that places the family at the centre of the processes of social reproduction. The family located mechanisms of social reproduction are found in the consequences of strategies of mobilisation of its resources in their different forms. Of particular interest for the purposes of this study are forms of family resources or ‘*family capital*’³ of a non-monetary nature. This framework draws heavily upon ideas in the works of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam, the contemporary key thinkers in social capital theory. More specifically concepts such as that of *social* and *cultural capital* are discussed in relation to understanding the role of forms of non-monetary capital, which influence educational outcomes in a number of ways. The manner in which the different types of capital become available for use by different families in the field of choice making in education connects directly to issues of social class and gender and has consequences for issues relating to processes of social reproduction in the Cypriot society to be investigated in the empirical study.

The issue of choice making in education is often connected to the theoretical discussion that follows in the next section about what determines individual social action. What influences individuals to make the particular choices that they make? Are they free agents who determine their actions freely or are there structural constraints in the society that determine those actions? In this discussion, the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has been helpful in providing ideas, concepts and theoretical tools. Among the ideas that are examined are his *Theory of Practise* (1977a, 1990) and his theoretical concepts of *Habitus* and *Field*.

¹ The ability to cope and make use of the educational system is viewed in sociological rather than psychological terms.

² Structural elements constitute the cultural and social environments within which individuals are located.

³ The kind of capital referred to, here, draws directly from Bourdieu’s (1986) description of the concept of capital in ‘*The forms of capital*’.

2.2.1 The importance of studies looking at choices for post school destinations

It is commonplace to say that we need to recognise that choice making in education produces different educational and occupational outcomes for individuals coming from different social class backgrounds. Many studies have shown that social class differences in educational outcomes in many societies are considerable and persistent (Shavit & Blossfeld, 1993). One way through which these differences occur is the diverse pattern of choices that young people and their parents make at key transition points in their educational careers. These transition points are very important as they channel young people into different pathways. One such important point is when young people and their families are faced with choice making as to future destinations when leaving secondary school. These decisions constitute an important moment in the lives of most people, as it is the moment when the decisions that will be taken will most probably have a significant impact on the lives of each young person for the next very important years of their lives. Careers will begin to take shape as a result of these decisions and for some people this may mark the way their working life will develop for a very long time to come. Hatcher (1998:7) argues that ‘these transition points are sites of social selectivity in terms of class, and often in terms of gender and ethnicity’. He also argues (ibid.) that ‘choices concerning transition to higher levels of education differ according to class position, even when there is no difference in level of achievement’. This remark is very important for drawing our attention to the issue of the effects of social class in the choice-making process because if academic achievement does not explain (or only partly explains) social inequalities in the selection process, how can class differences in educational choices, over and above achievement, be explained?

Providing sociological explanations for social phenomena, events and processes is a challenging task. This is so, partly because social phenomena are complex and many factors contribute in various degrees to determining possible outcomes. It is also a challenging task because social issues can be approached using different sociological perspectives that may lead to a variety of understandings and interpretations of the social world. In social theory, for example, there are broadly speaking two opposing viewpoints as to how individual decisions are made. One that regards individuals as

free agents capable of taking rational decisions ('rational action theory') and another that does not accept that individuals are able to make meaningful individual choices but that the decisions that they make are 'enforced' on them by various structural features of their environments ('structural theory'). The position argued here is for a middle ground between these two polarised positions. This provides a heuristic synthesis of the two apparently irreconcilable poles mentioned above which constitute a framework for the study of the way people make choices about their future educational and occupational destinations. This is often referred to using the term coined by Giddens as 'structuration theory'. Within this structuration theory the way students and their families go about making their choices for their future is examined. What this approach entails is explained in more detail in the next section.

2.2.2 Approaching decision-making

As mentioned above, the issue of decision-making can be examined through an approach that regards individuals as choice making agents that determine freely their own outcomes by weighing the pros and cons of the different options they have available (Rational choice theory). This approach has been developed theoretically by Goldthorpe (1996) as Rational Action Theory. In this approach people behave according to their interests, attempting to maximise the utility of their decisions. When making decisions about educational progression, individuals rely on the rational evaluation of the costs, benefits and probabilities of subsequent success in terms of economic returns of the various options that are available. For Goldthorpe (1996) education is an investment 'good' which families try to obtain in order to preserve their class position or guard against downward social mobility. Middle class families base their decisions on cost-benefit-probability calculations in order to ensure that their children maintain their class positions. For children from middle class families moving into higher education, even if their ability levels are not particularly high is less risky than for lower class youngsters because their families have the capacity to absorb the costs. For same ability level children and their parents from less advantaged families, however, a similar risk may not be an option. Instead it is likely that more modest options may be adopted.

On the other hand, an alternative approach to examining similar issues about decision making for educational progression, is through a structuralist approach by focusing

on those structural elements and institutions in society that influence and shape possible decisions that social actors make in a ‘constraining’ way (Structural theory). Broadly speaking, this approach assumes that individual social action follows from causes, either social or psychological, that are obscure to the individual consciousness. According to this structuralist approach, which has its roots in the theoretical ideas of Emile Durkheim, individuals do not weigh up their alternatives and consciously choose what they perceive as the most cost-effective action but tend to be moved to a course of action by causes which are constituted by constraints originating from their social and cultural environment.

An alternative way of approaching these issues, as already mentioned, could be an approach that synthesises the two previous ones. This third approach sees individuals as agents who make choices, by expressing ‘free will’ within social frameworks that are shaped by socially structured patterns of opportunity. This approach is what Giddens’s ‘*Structuration theory*’ and Bourdieu’s ‘*theory of practice*’ have tried to capture. One interesting example of this approach was used by Gambetta (1987). Gambetta tried to address the issue of what determines individual educational choices and decisions within a *structuration theory* framework. He aimed to determine whether individuals ‘jumped’ towards the destinations that attracted them most (rational choice approach) or ‘got pushed from behind’ into given destinations (structuralist approach). He concluded that individuals ‘jumped as much as they could and as much as they perceived it was worth jumping’ (1987:187). In other words, according to Gambetta, not all children can jump to the same extent and there are differences in the number or weight of pushes they receive in several directions, shaping their opportunities as well as their preferences. This opens up the theme that the structure of opportunity to exercise ‘choices’ varies widely in society.

This middle ground between the rational choice approach and the structuralist approach is the one adopted here following the lead set in recent theoretical and methodological discussions by Giddens and with respect to education by Gambetta (1987) and in more recent times by a number of researchers, which include amongst others, Ball et al. (2000), Hodkinson, (1998), Reay (1998), Hodkinson et al. (1996), Hodkinson et al. (1997). Bourdieu’s theories and particularly his *theory of practice* (Bourdieu, 1990), which includes concepts such as that of *habitus*, *field* and *capital*

has prove to be a good source for obtaining ideas to look at choice making in education. Thus, Bourdieu seems to suggest that the two positions are not really alternatives but through the use of the concept of *habitus* they can be viewed as sides of the same coin (1998). Before explaining this point further, I should point out that even though I use Bourdieu's approach as one that covers the middle ground of the two opposing approaches mentioned in the previous paragraph, I acknowledge the fact that his approach has been criticised as not escaping from structuralist determinism if social action is determined by a system of enduring dispositions, 'habitus' and social actors cannot exercise freedom of choice⁴. Bourdieu argues (1998:25) that 'subjects' are endowed with a system of an acquired system of preferences, a practical and dispositional sense (*habitus*) of how best to respond in a given situation. Bourdieu (1998:24) developed an account of social reality in which the two opposing philosophies as to what determines social action (rational action theory and structuralist theory) are synthesised. He believes that social agents, in our case students, choosing an educational track or discipline, or families choosing an institutional direction for their children, are not subject to mechanical forces and act under the constraint of *causes*; nor are they totally conscious and knowing subjects acting with full knowledge of the facts and potential outcomes as the champions of *rational action theory* assume⁵. In fact, Bourdieu (1998:25) argues that 'subjects' are active and knowing agents endowed with a *practical sense*, that is, an acquired system of preferences, of principles of vision and division, and also a system of durable cognitive structures and of dispositional sense of action which 'direct' an individual to an appropriate response to the action at a given situation. This cognitive system of preferences is what Bourdieu calls *habitus*. *Habitus* is the product of lived experiences and ensures the presence of past experiences in the individual practices over time. It makes possible the production of thoughts, perceptions and actions

⁴ Nash (1995:27), for example, argues that although fundamentally a structuralist, Bourdieu tried to distance his theorization from classical structuralism which he regarded as deterministic and unable to explain the movement from structure to practice. Nash argues that to overcome the accusation of determinism Bourdieu introduced the concept of 'habitus' as a mediating mechanism between structure and agency. Some find that Bourdieu's attempt to bridge the two opposites with the concept of *habitus* was not a particularly successful one. Nash (1995) for example believes that his attempt was unsuccessful and Hatcher (1998:18) also seems to suggest that Bourdieu's key concept of *habitus* entails social determinism.

⁵ I believe that here lies an answer to criticisms that *habitus* working at the unconscious level is deterministic and so the structured and structuring operation of *habitus* does not take place through a process of conscious strategic calculations. Bourdieu seems to suggest that individuals are not completely bound by *habitus* in their decision making, but it is the active interaction of *habitus* with the given reality that produces action in a given moment.

inherent in the particular conditions of its production. For Bourdieu *habitus* invokes understanding of identity premised on familial legacy and early childhood socialisation. It is the power of adaptation to the outside world. It enables us to understand individuals as a complex amalgam of their past and present, an amalgam that is always in a process of developing (Reay, 1998:521). *Habitus* is complex, deeply embedded and lies behind action that is relatively spontaneous. An apt characterisation is captured by reference to participation in a sporting game, where *habitus* would be called the ‘feel’ of how the game was played, enabling skilled players to participate pre-reflexively for movement to movement in the production of their action in relation to the actions of other players in the changing contexts of the play.

When individuals come to make the decisions about their future educational and occupational outcomes these decisions are influenced by ‘socialised frames of perception and thought’ but also by ‘real and changing social structures’ (Ball et al, 2000: 22). In other words, they make their decisions within specific social frameworks or what Hodkinson et al (1996) describe as ‘horizons for action’. An ‘horizon for action’ is the ‘area within which actions can be taken and decisions made’ (Ibid: 3), and is defined in part by objective realities of the range of circumstances and options available and in part by subjective narrowing of the range on the basis of each individual’s perceptions (*habitus*). In other words, the decisions that individuals make are framed within structural constraints in societies but individuals have the ability to be reflective and exercise judgement and develop strategies within these frameworks. According to Hodkinson these horizons are the perspectives on and possibilities for action, for participants in a given field. These horizons for action formulate a framework, which enables our view of the world, and the choices we make within it. Within these ‘horizons for action’ different individuals may exercise widely contrasting strategies and develop diverse actions resulting in differing outcomes. These strategies and actions are located in specific fields where the strategies and the forces that influence them make sense because they have value. In this sense Gambetta’s (1987) and Hodkinson et al’s (1996) theoretical perspectives of how individuals relate to the structural forces that constitute their social and cultural environment and form the frameworks of their action, provide a reasonable context within which to investigate issues of choice

making in education and has been adopted by contemporary research on the issue (Ball et al, 2000).

2.2.3 *Capital, field* and choices in education

In the previous section it has been argued that the decisions people make about their future can be understood in terms of what Bourdieu calls '*habitus*' that they develop during their life history. According to Bourdieu, human action is the conjoint expression of an individual's thought and activity in the objective world. For Bourdieu the first dimension, *thought*, is described with the notion of '*habitus*' and the latter, *activity in the objective world*, with the notion of '*field*'. The *field* for Bourdieu is a structured system of social relations constituted across micro and macro levels. Individuals, groups and institutions exist in structural relation to each other. These relations determine and reproduce social activity.

Social activity has also been referred to as played out according to the principles of a *market* (Grenfell et al, 1998:20) where individuals bid, manoeuvre and compete for its 'products'. These 'products' within a field have value, which buys other products of the field. Bourdieu uses the word *capital* to describe the social products, both resources as well as rewards, of a field through which individuals carry out competitive social action. These social products can be material or ideational. Because of the way societies are hierarchically structured, capital is not available to everybody in the same way. There are quantitative and most importantly qualitative differences in the capital bestowed in each individual. Capital can take three forms: economic, social and cultural (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital is money, property and other material objects; social capital refers to 'networks of lasting social relations'; and cultural capital, refers to legitimate knowledge of one kind or another, and exists in three distinct forms: in the embodied state as disposition of the mind and body (*habitus*), in the objectified state as differentially valued cultural goods and in the credentialised institutional state, in education, as academic qualifications. The cultural capital of those who are successful consists of the practical and/or theoretical knowledge that allows these individuals to function effectively within the 'market' and achieve their aims, while at the same time adopting the legitimate identity of being successful in a just system of relations.

It appears that for Bourdieu everybody is potentially free to act, everything is up for grabs, everything is negotiable. But because individuals inherit different social positions and possess unequal amounts of *capital* relative to other 'competitors', some are relatively better equipped and better placed to make choices and thus are in a more advantaged position than others. Differential structures ensure that not everyone is equal in society. Some individuals who possess more capital than others, are better equipped to make more informed and more successful choices than those who lack it. Thus, there are bound to be winners and losers⁶.

2.2.4 Capital, *habitus* and horizons for action

In section 2.2.2 it was argued that individual social action is influenced by the *habitus* and the changing structures that constitute each individual's 'horizons for action'. Through the *habitus*, horizons for action are often based on interpretations of the present through the light of young people's and their parents' experiences of present opportunities and past experiences (Hodkinson et al, 1996:150). The 'horizons for action' within which individual social action appears, can be enhanced or limited by the presence or absence of different capitals that have the potential to facilitate human action because they relate to the particular social structures within which the individual is located. That is, their value is linked to these structures. The availability of these capitals has the 'capability' to influence the shaping of *habitus* the character of which is not static but rather it is dynamic. Reay (1998:521) argues that *habitus* should be viewed as referring to a dynamic process of social identity and self-identity, which is constantly in a process of completion. Importantly, the process is open and there is no finality or finished identity. In Bourdieu's approach, *habitus* is the product of life experiences through the process of 'socialisation' in early life. Furthermore, *habitus* is also transformed by changing social conditions (Jenkins, 1992:82). The changing social conditions that produce adjustment/transformation of *habitus* may relate to the availability of different capitals to be used at a given social field. As individuals go through the process of socialisation building their distinctive

⁶ The fact that capital is not equally distributed is something that one may argue is an endemic feature to most societies because they are hierarchically and horizontally structured. What is sociologically interesting though is how these inequalities become legitimated and thus unchallenged particularly from those social groups that are located in the disadvantaged positions in terms of possession of effective capital in its different forms.

habitus, at the same time they articulate several assets: namely, they accumulate knowledge (cultural capital), social connections with individuals, networks etc. (social capital) and acquire social prestige, a certain reputation or ‘name’ for themselves (symbolic capital). When these individuals come to a moment in their lives, when decisive decisions are to be taken that will have significant consequences for their future, e.g. post secondary school destinations, the knowledge, the social connections, their symbolic capital will reshape a certain *habitus* which will influence their decision making.

Hence, just as capital (social, cultural, symbolic) accumulates during *habitus* formation (Grenfell, 1998:21) different forms of capital, particularly those with a non-material basis, which relate and gain value within a given social structure, influence the transformation of *habitus*, that in turn facilitates action in a certain field at a given time. Bourdieu himself argues (1998:25) that the structure of capital (economic, cultural, social) ‘is retranslated into a system of preferences’ (*habitus*) which in turn motivates individuals to direct themselves in their educational and social choices toward different social destinations and to adopt different practices and opinions. It could be argued that there is a ‘systematic relationship’ between *capital* and *habitus*. There is mutual reinforcement between the two; just as capital (in its non material form) proliferates during *habitus* formation at the same time capital shapes and reshapes *habitus* due to the new conditions that it creates for the individual within which to act. Thus the horizons for action for each individual are affected by the ‘amount’ and the ‘quality’ of the different capitals that are available to them.

The role of the family⁷ in making different forms of capital available to individuals becomes paramount. For this study, the possession and the mobilisation of the cultural and social capital available to a family could facilitate or hinder the capacity for making choices for future post-secondary school destinations. It is argued that the presence of these familial resources shape a certain kind of ‘*habitus*’ that informs the process of decision making at the end of secondary education when students and their

⁷ When I refer to family I refer to the ‘traditional’ Cypriot family, which typically consists of both parents and two or three children. As will be shown on chapter 6 nearly 80% of the families included in this study corresponded to this description. In the same set of data nearly 95% of both parents were present in the family household.

families are faced with dilemmas, options, challenges and various prospects, therefore next, two forms of familial resources that can potentially influence the generation of diverse '*habitus*' towards choice making in education; cultural and social capital are examined.

2.3 Family resources facilitating choice making in education

In this section, two non-monetary forms of family capital cultural and social, their definitions, operationalisation and application in empirical research, and how they can be of use for the purposes of studying choice making in education are examined. This is done because different patterns of decision-making in education are often linked with social class differences along with gender and ethnicity. Social class differences relate to the possession of resources that potentially influence the life chances of individuals in a number of ways. This eventually has consequences in processes of social reproduction in most societies. The importance of studies exploring such issues are important because they can direct policy makers to consider ways to ameliorate the effects of unequal distributions of resources that are usually the product of unequal social backgrounds⁸. This becomes an issue particularly in societies where the claim for enhancing meritocracy as part of a 'modernisation' process generally appears to be everybody's public quest: politicians, educators and parents, alike.

2.3.1 The significance of the family and its non-monetary forms of capital for educational choices

Families provide their members with those real and symbolic resources that influence their life chances in the social arena. Of particular interest to this study are those non-monetary capitals that are required for success in schooling and influence the choices that students make upon their completion of secondary education. It is important to investigate how these non-monetary capitals are distributed among different families and how they may be crucial in explaining different educational outcomes.

⁸ By unequal social backgrounds I mean the fact that families are usually characterized by the possession of unequal material, non-material and symbolic resources that often are the product of their location in societies that are both horizontally and hierarchically organized.

According to Bourdieu (1998:19) families are *corporate bodies* which have a tendency to perpetuate their social being with all their powers and privileges, which are at the basis of reproduction strategies as well as strategies that aim to help their members advance socially or protect them from downward social mobility. These strategies may include: fertility strategies, matrimonial strategies, successional strategies, economic strategies and last, but not least, educational strategies. The family also, plays a key influential role in transmitting resources, and by making them available for mobilisation in any particular context of their strategies, from one generation to another. The distribution of these resources create opportunities and constraints, which in turn constitute, in sociological terms, both the source and at the same time the medium⁹ through which social inequalities are being passed on to the younger generations.

In a previous section (section 2.2) the term *capital* was presented as a product and medium of social activity that can facilitate social action. In this section the value of non-monetary forms of capital is presented, in order to establish an account of the origins and the distribution of what this study regards as non-monetary forms of capital. Bourdieu (1986) argues that at a given point in time the notion of capital in its different types, its distribution and reproduction are important to define and understand the structures of the social world. Capital can exist in symbolic, objectified and/or embodied forms. Drawing attention to non-monetary forms of capital is not done in an attempt to disregard the value of economic capital, which, as Bourdieu rightly argues, is ‘at the heart of all other forms of capital’ (1986). Rather, it is done in an effort to illustrate the complexity of social relations and the fact that purely economic exchanges do not always exhaustively, directly and adequately explain differences in social processes. Indeed, indirectly, an appreciation of ‘economic’ relations requires these ‘non-economic’ contexts. There is also another reason for focusing attention on non-monetary forms of capital. While the way financial capital is being reproduced or used for social reproduction is usually a fairly straight forward process¹⁰, non-monetary forms of capital function socially in potentially covert manners, in complex cultural processes that may serve to disguise

⁹ The family becomes a medium for passing on advantages or disadvantages particularly in societies where it has a central role in social organization. In the Cypriot social setting, for example, the family as an institution has been characterized (Christodoulou, 1995) as one of the most active cells in the social organization.

possible social injustices. The reproduction of capital in general is the product of a process, which Bourdieu calls conversion of one form of capital to another (1986). Economic capital may be converted to cultural capital through long-term investment in education etc. Cultural capital is converted to social capital, etc. By exploiting the convertibility of the types of capital, better-disguised transmission of capital is ensured and the distribution of these types of capital become determinants in the reproduction of inequalities in the modern social structures. 'Modern inequalities' do not refer just to the unequal ways with which wealth is being distributed. They also, refer to the unequal way with which other non-monetary resources (information, knowledge, social networks) are available across the different social groups. These are extremely important in providing *access* to valuable social goods (opportunities, education etc.). For that, the importance of examining non-monetary forms of capital becomes pre-eminent.

In the previous section it was argued that capitals are assets that facilitate human action. To get a better understanding of this process the relationship between *capital* and *habitus*¹¹ was examined. Earlier, on page 31, it was argued that capital and habitus are in a 'systematic relationship' where there is mutual reinforcement between the two. Just as capital accumulates during the process of habitus formation, *habitus*, which directs individuals in their social and in this case their educational choices, is transformed. This section looks closely at the conceptualisation of the two non-monetary forms of capital, cultural and social, that I consider being closely associated with the formation and transformation of *habitus*.

2.3.2 The cultural capital theory

In this section, Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital is presented. Also, this section examines in some detail how the concept of cultural capital has been operationalised in a wide range of empirical research in order to develop the particular way that this

¹⁰ Through direct inheritance of money, property, land shares etc.

¹¹ Bourdieu clearly associates *habitus* with cultural capital. It can be argued, however, that it can be associated with other forms of capital as well. Jenkins (1992:82) argues that for Bourdieu *habitus* can be transformed by changed circumstances. Even though for Jenkins it was not clear whether these circumstances could be external to the social group concerned (1992:83) or not, I would like to argue that these changed circumstances could refer to the changing condition of an individual's resources (capitals).

study proposes to examine cultural capital as a multifaceted familial resource that can influence in a number of different ways an individual's prospects for success in the educational system.

As stated above the concept of cultural capital has been extensively applied over the years in a wide range of educational research and in those applications there have been a number of different ways with which it has been operationalised. This, if nothing else, points to its versatile character and to the need to be able to identify its different forms prior to its application in empirical research. Broadly speaking it has been examined by looking, for instance, at students, their cultural practices, skills, attitudes, knowledge in relation to their schooling experience or outcomes, or by looking at parents' education, cultural practices and skills and ability to engage successfully in processes and institutions influencing children's education. Such attempts are expanded on in the next section.

Many researchers point out that the reason why cultural capital has been so widely operationalised is because Bourdieu's conception of cultural capital is very broad and not easily quantifiable. For Bourdieu cultural capital may take many forms, reflecting the internalisation of behaviour, dispositions, knowledge and habits acquired in the socialisation process or accumulated through investment in education and training or in the acquisition of cultural goods (McClenaghan, 2000:568). Cultural capital as legitimised knowledge present in a home environment allows parents and children to secure advantages from the educational process. Bourdieu's own operationalisation of cultural capital did not capture the broad conceptualisation mentioned above. He assumed that high parental level of education revealed high level of parental cultural capital (1977b: 497). This operationalisation of the concept has been characterised as inadequate (see Sullivan, 2001) and not capturing the broadness of the concept.

Some empirical studies defined cultural capital as cultural 'competence' and 'familiarity' interpreted as knowledge of and participation in the dominant culture, Di Maggio (1982), Di Maggio and Mohr (1985), Lamb (1989), Katsillis and Robinsons (1990), Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (1996). De Graaf et al (2000) measured cultural capital by investigating reading habits and *beaux-art* participation. Others such as Halsey, Heath and Ridge (1980) like Bourdieu used parental education as a proxy for

cultural capital whereas Lamond and Lareau (1988) defined cultural capital as parental knowledge and skill to negotiate successfully with the different processes and procedures within the educational system in order to provide the best possible opportunities and prospects for their children.

Sullivan (2001:896) comments that given the fact that researchers have operationalised the concept of cultural capital in different ways it is not surprising that empirical studies on educational attainment have varied in their conclusions. The studies that are presented below aim to demonstrate the various ways several researchers operationalised the concept of cultural capital and that the conclusions that they reached are very dissimilar and on occasions in conflict with each other. In the end, this presentation will point to the need to be aware of the different forms that cultural capital may take. Thus, when forming the rationale with which this study proposed to operationalise this concept in its empirical investigation of choice-making in education, it aimed to be in a position to identify cultural capital in its various forms and shapes and to examine ways it could potentially influence this process at different levels.

i. Cultural capital as 'high culture'

Bourdieu (1974) tried to investigate cultural transmission within the family as one of the strategies that families employ in order to promote their social objectives. Education produces returns in the form of credentialised identities and knowledge, which can then be 'exchanged' at different levels in the labour market for secure and preferably, for many, for an elite position. Differences in cultural capital explain in part the association between the socio-economic positions of parents and their children.

According to Bourdieu individuals enter the educational system with different endowments of cultural capital and cultural know-how. Children from high socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to be exposed to what is perceived by a society as high culture (i.e. highbrow cultural activities) and those who acquire the 'correct' cultural capital are more likely to do well in school and subsequently to have better chances of achieving high levels of schooling than children from lower class backgrounds. Schools play a key part in the general process of social and

cultural reproduction as they provide a kind of education that allows for the better performance of high-status pupils because they are better able to decode practices of education and operate within the 'rules of the game', which constitute the social process of schooling. It is often reported that children coming from advantaged family backgrounds appear to have better grades at school, demonstrate more skills and respond with more ease and spontaneity to the demands of the schooling system. Their familiarity with the intellectual practices and activities allows them to demonstrate what the school recognises as intellectual abilities and skills which are rewarded compared with children coming from less privileged families. By rewarding these cultural skills and preferences, the advantaged children capitalise and move more easily into higher levels of schooling compared with their lower class peers, and thus their advantages are reinforced. By appearing as objective and neutral, education appears to be promoting the meritocratic rationale that talent brings its own rewards. This is often reinforced by the success in the educational system of *some* lower class students. In this way the whole system takes on the appearance of realising equity and legitimacy.

Effective cultural capital consists of cognitive and ideological elements that are the grounding and 'prior knowledge' required by schooling. It has been demonstrated that the children of privileged families come to school with cultural knowledge and are familiar with specific cultural works. This was shown by Di Maggio (1982), Di Maggio and Mohr (1985), Lamb (1989) Katsillis and Robinsons (1990), Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (1996) Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997), De Graaf et al (2000), Sullivan (2001), among others. This cultural knowledge, even though it does not consist of the knowledge that the school transmits directly, does have an indirect effect in the learning process. It gives these children a generally positive predisposition; a '*habitus*' toward what the school recognises as learning, and is manifested in the process of pedagogy and curriculum organisation. This long-term invisible familiarisation is developed in a 'natural' way without being forced on them. This *natural* familiarisation creates a set of what are recognised by the educational process as positive attitudes and beliefs towards knowledge, education and school in particular as well as capacity for handling schoolwork. These dispositions towards educational institutions, practices and cultures may differ considerably from one social class to another. Regarding the issue of progressing to higher levels of

education, for example, children coming from such relatively privileged environments may face the prospect of university education as something that seems to come naturally as the last stage of their education (as a 'natural biography') while children from socially disadvantaged environments may view university education as something that is beyond what they can achieve or is expected of them to achieve (going against the odds).

Some studies, mostly carried out within the context of the US education system, operationalised the concept of cultural capital by trying to find indicators of the presence of cultural capital in the home. Such studies suggested that attendance at 'high' cultural events (concerts, galleries, museums etc.) or familiarity with 'high' culture could be used as indicators of the presence of cultural capital. One can appreciate that such attempts to find indicators of cultural capital may be seen as a narrow approach to the operationalisation of cultural capital in relation to the way Bourdieu defined the concept of cultural capital, which includes language use, manners, tastes and orientations/dispositions reflecting the internalisation of behaviour, knowledge and habits during the socialisation process.

In a review of relevant research that was done in the U.S. where the concept of cultural capital was used to explain patterns of academic success, Kingston (2001:89) argues that cultural capital did not fulfil the promise that was seen when it was first introduced in the literature, which was to offer an explanation of the connection between social privilege and academic success. In his review Kingston basically advances two main arguments: (1) cultural capital, defined in terms of exclusionary class-related practices and dispositions, does not substantially account for the relationship between social privilege and academic success and (2) too many conceptually distinct variables have come to be placed under the big umbrella of cultural capital, creating a distorted sense of what accounts for academic success.

As such, for example, cultural capital has been defined as constituting 'widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, goals and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion' (Lamond and Lareau, 1988:156). In this sense, according to Kingston (2001:90), researchers argued that cultural capital represents legitimate high status signals that are used for

exclusionary purposes. The most common indicators, involved measures of participation or appreciation of 'elite' cultural arts, such as going to art galleries, museums or liking classical music and generally valuing elite cultural tastes (Kingston, 2001:90). The studies that operationalised cultural capital by associating it with 'high culture' that are presented below are by no means an exhaustive list of the various studies that are available in the social studies literature, but are a selection that aims, not only to point to the versatile character of the concept of cultural capital and the wide range of the educational processes with which it has been associated, but also to the various and often dissimilar conclusions that have been reached.

- Studies pointing to positive outcomes

One of the first American studies trying to apply the concept of cultural capital in explaining differences in academic achievement and particularly on secondary school grades, was the study by Di Maggio (1982). Di Maggio (1982) measured high school students' cultural capital using self-reports of involvement in art, music and literature. His study showed that students' involvement in art, music and literature was positively related to high school grades. A notable finding in his analysis was that students' cultural capital was significantly related to grades, net of family background. In a later study Di Maggio and Mohr (1985) also found significant effects of the respondents cultural capital, measured by attitudes towards, activities in and knowledge about high culture, on years of schooling completed after controlling for father's educational and occupational prestige. Kingston (2001:92) remarks that Di Maggio's findings offer only limited support to the cultural capital theory because in essence what was shown was that cultural capital facilitated the academic success of anyone who had it and it was not the resource of a particular social class. This counters the argument that cultural capital is a causal mechanism that mediates between familial high status and academic success and thus is a mechanism that reproduces social privilege.

Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997) studied the importance of 'high brow' cultural capital at different ages on the likelihood of making particular educational transitions in the United States. Their measure of cultural capital included whether individuals participated in various art classes namely painting, sculpture, or dance at different ages. They also measured parental cultural capital by measuring whether parents

participated in cultural activities when their children were growing up. They found that the effects of parental cultural capital, as well as cultural participation at different ages, were strong in determining educational success measured by the transition to higher levels in education. Kingston (2001) suggests that the study by Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997) is vulnerable to the charge of the omitted variable bias because parental cultural capital may well reflect the association with a whole set of factors that the researchers did not include that enhance academic success, such as parenting style, encouragement and assistance with school related work.

One other study in the context of the American educational system was the one by Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (1996). They examined the racial inequalities in schooling and differences in parental cultural capital. They measured parental cultural capital by considering four parental activities: attendance to classical music, plays and art museums and whether they encouraged their children to read literature. Their results showed that exposure to high status western culture was associated with higher levels of schooling. They also showed that the integration of Black people into high-status culture had contributed to the Black-White convergence in schooling. What was problematic with their analysis, according to Kingston (2001:94), was the claim that the two trends, the increase in parental cultural capital over time and the increase in black educational attainment, were causally related. Roscigno and Alnworth-Darnell (1999) did a similar study on the effects of cultural capital on academic achievement among black and white American eighth graders. They measured cultural capital by looking at student's participation in cultural trips and cultural classes and the educational resources of the household. They reported that even though there were significant racial differences in cultural capital, it had only a small mediating effect on the gap between black-white achievement as measured by school grades.

The studies mentioned above are studies examining factors that contribute to school success measured by school grades, results in formal examinations or transitions to higher levels of schooling. The way they operationalised cultural capital was to try to find indicators of the presence of cultural capital in the house by looking at participation and/or familiarity with beaux-arts as proxy measures. The results found (positive, ambiguous or negative) should be viewed with caution because of the criticism that is associated with them and principally the idea that they do not fully

explore the multifaceted character of the concept of cultural capital. Also, what Kingston (2001:94) seems to be criticising in these studies needs to be explained, namely that these studies do not offer convincing evidence that class based differences in cultural capital endowments- defined in terms of 'elite' artistic orientations- explain why socially advanced students do better at school. It seems that the benefits that may accrue from cultural capital cut across the different classes and so they do not offer advantage to elite groups.

-Studies not reaching to conclusive outcomes

Other studies have operationalised cultural capital in similar ways, to the ones mentioned above, and did not produce very conclusive results about its effects on educational achievement. De Graaf (1986), for example, in his study of the impact of financial and cultural resources on educational attainment in the Netherlands found that the association between parental participation in high culture (visits to museums, galleries, theatres, concerts and historical buildings) and children's educational attainment, even though it was positive, was weak. In a later study, also in the context of the Netherlands, De Graaf et al (2000) found that parental reading behaviour and not parental beaux-arts participation was associated with children's educational attainment. This, finding however, does not refute the cultural capital theory as it can be assumed that parents who read more will have better linguistic skills and will be able to contribute to a climate in the house that sets examples for the children. Thus parental reading habits could be seen as a different approach to investigate the presence of cultural capital in the home.

A study that found clearly ambiguous results was the one by Lamb (1989). In his study Lamb (1989) examined whether cultural consumption measured by attendance at art exhibitions and interest in art had an impact on the educational aspirations of Australian secondary school students. He found that cultural consumption was a significant source of differentiation among boys' plans to obtain a higher education but had less impact on girls' plans. Lamb's (1989) results should be viewed with caution because of the omitted variable bias. It may be argued that boys who were showing more interest in art were boys that had other personal traits as well such as interest in schoolwork etc and these may have been the contributing factors that differentiated them in their plans to attend higher education.

A recent study carried out in Britain by Sullivan (2001) is interesting because the researcher has developed a broader operationalisation of the concept of cultural capital than the ones presented so far. Sullivan studied a broad range of possible indicators of cultural capital, which consisted of three components: 1. Cultural activities such as reading habits, television viewing (programmes that were defined by their cultural capital content), music and participation in 'formal' culture: art gallery, theatre and concert attendance. 2. Cultural knowledge and 3. Linguistic competence in terms of vocabulary used. Sullivan found that cultural capital offered a partial explanation of class differentials in GCSE attainment because even though cultural capital had an effect on GCSE attainment, social class retained a large and significant direct effect on GCSE attainment after the cultural capital variables were controlled for. What was interesting in this particular study was the distinction between those cultural activities that should be seen as 'capital' associated with educational success. According to Sullivan activities such as reading, television viewing habits, cultural knowledge and linguistic ability should be seen as cultural capital associated with GCSE attainment rather than music habits (listening and playing) or participation to formal culture because they relate more to educational success.

Other studies which operationalised cultural capital as interest and association with 'high' culture, reached clearly negative results in terms of the demonstrated impact of cultural capital on academic success. One such example that presents particular interest for the present study in terms of the social context in which it took place is that of Katsillis and Robinsons (1990).

-The study by Katsillis and Robinson (1990)

Katsillis and Robinson's (1990) work is of particular interest to the present study in terms of content. Firstly, it refers to the case of Greece, which bears close resemblance to Cyprus, and secondly, because it studied a similar population of graduating secondary school students. The focus of that study was the influence of students' cultural capital on students' academic performance. Their regression analysis showed that family socio-economic status, that is if the family belonged to bourgeois class (measured by father's education and occupation), had a statistically

significant, positive effect on the cultural capital of students. That is there was a positive association between social class and participation in cultural events such as attendance at theatre and lectures and visits to museum and galleries. Cultural capital, though, had no influence on academic rewards measured by the achieved grade point average. However, as in the case of Sullivan (2001) in England, they found a significant total effect of family socio-economic status on educational achievement when cultural capital variables were controlled. This finding indicated that in Greece cultural capital was not a mechanism that transformed family socio-economic status into educational achievement. But since cultural capital by the way it was measured apparently was not a mechanism in this process, their question was: “How was background inequality transformed into academic rewards in Greece?” Katsillis and Robinsons (1990) argued that the direct effects of family socio-economic status on student’s achievements were difficult to explain. In an earlier work Katsillis (1987) suggested that differential access to private tutorial schooling (*frontisteria*) may have had an effect in student achievement and since families were paying for such schools it was likely that family socio-economic status had some effect on the quality and quantity of tutorial schooling. In their final conclusion, Katsillis and Robinsons (1990) reported that the major mechanisms through which family socio-economic status was transformed into educational achievement were individualistic factors such as ability measured by previous achievement in school and effort measured by the amount of time students spent on their schoolwork. In other words, they seem to purport that there appears to be a meritocratic process in place, in the sense that all students, depending mostly on the effort they put on their school work could achieve better outcomes in their work. The reproduction that occurred did so mainly through the differential ability and effort of students from different socio-economic backgrounds.

What can be commented on as criticism of this study is that they adopted a narrow operationalisation of cultural capital (see discussion in previous section) and therefore, their findings should not be considered as discrediting the cultural capital theory. Furthermore, it seems that this study omits general socio-structural elements in the Greek society that possibly directed students from various social class backgrounds in their differential approach to school. This is something that the present study will take very seriously into account. That is, the investigation of those

mechanisms (sometimes obscured) that make students from some social class backgrounds more willing to spend extra time and effort towards achieving different results in school. It could be that students from higher social backgrounds achieve better because they develop the necessary positive dispositions and attitudes towards schoolwork. The question that arises is what lies behind these *positive dispositions and attitudes*. Through the examination of the concept of '*social capital*' it is intended to offer explanations and suggestions as to possible answers.

There is a common element about the studies presented so far. All have used indicators of the presence of cultural capital in the family and statistical analyses to examine the impact of cultural capital on different educational processes, school achievement, transition to higher levels of education, educational attainment etc. There are other approaches to the operationalisation of cultural capital.

ii. Cultural capital as parental education

As discussed earlier, Bourdieu's own operationalisation of cultural capital involved using the educational level reached as proxy for cultural capital. Some other studies too, assumed that parental qualifications could be an indirect measure of the amount of cultural capital that is present in the home; the higher the academic qualifications the more cultural capital is present. One such study that applied the concept of cultural capital in empirical research was by Halsey, *et al.* (1980). In their study *Origins and Destinations*, which reports the results of the Oxford Social Mobility Project for England and Wales, Halsey, *et al.* tried to test Bourdieu's argument on cultural capital. They wanted to investigate whether cultural capital influenced educational success as indicated by formal examination results. They assumed that parents who have passed through academic institutions of grammar school, public school or university would have a greater understanding of the educational system and its culture and would be better equipped to help their children cope with the demands of that system. Their children would be more likely to acquire 'that system of predispositions' (the 'correct' *habitus*) and therefore they would have substantial advantages in the competition for selective school places. Their findings indicated that although cultural capital was important in influencing the selection of secondary school, thereafter its importance was minimal social class being the most important source of differential achievement in secondary education (1980:200). Jenkins

(1992:115,116) argues that Halsey *et al.* did not adequately prove their point because they employed a different concept of cultural capital from the one that Bourdieu proposed. More particularly, they used a narrow definition of cultural capital by employing parental academic achievement as an indicator of the amount of cultural capital circulating in the home, whereas Bourdieu's concept was much wider.

iii. Cultural capital as parental ability to engage in educational processes

Another approach in the examination of cultural capital and its impact on education was the one used by Lareau (1987) and Gewirtz et al (1995). These two studies approached the concept of cultural capital in a different manner from the ones used by the studies presented so far, in terms of the way they operationalised cultural capital. The difference lies in the methodology they applied and the meaning they attached to the concept. Lareau (1987) examined the value of using cultural capital in understanding social differences in family school relations and its impact on children's experiences of school. She argued that class related cultural factors shaped parents' compliance with teachers' requests for parental participation in schooling. Parents from professional-managerial families' have educational capabilities in supervising, monitoring and overseeing the educational experience of their children as well as the ability to mobilise goods, status and social connections (*social capital*). They generally get more involved in the education of their children using a variety of resources, real and symbolic and advance their children's education more, compared with parents from working class backgrounds who lacked or had fewer of the above resources. Lareau (1987) demonstrated that social class related resources when effectively used by parents, such as the use of suitable vocabularies and a sense of entitlement to interact with teachers as equals, become cultural capital and as such they are significant in the educational processes and affect positively the experiences of children in school.

In Britain, Gewirtz et al (1995) in their study of parental choice regarding their children's secondary school, identified parents (choosers) as belonging to three strongly class-related categories: The privileged/skilled choosers, mostly professional middle class parents, the semi-skilled choosers from a variety of backgrounds but

mostly working class strongly motivated to make use of their opportunity to choose, and the disconnected choosers who were mostly working class parents. They found that these groups of parents had differences in their possession of cultural capital, which they specified as the ability to mobilise and practise education related procedures. For example, they found that privileged/skilled choosers' cultural capital played a crucial role in engaging with and utilising the possibilities for choice of the best secondary school. More specifically these parents had not only a good understanding of the bureaucratic systems of school admissions but they were able to 'decode' the school systems and organisation, to discriminate between schools, engage and question teachers and managers, collect scan and interpret various sources of information about the schools. They knew how to use formal and informal networks (*social capital*), knew how to approach, present, mount a case, maintain pressure, make an impact and be remembered amongst those with influence in the school's choice process and in the end they made the best possible informed choices for their children.

In the last two studies by Lareau (1987) and Gewirtz et al (1995) it was pointed out that there is a strong link between cultural capital and the ability of individuals (in this case of parents) to effectively access social networks, connections and acquaintances to promote the interests of their offspring in education and in future occupational attainment. In the next section, this non-economic form of capital '*social*' which refers to the ability of individuals to make use of the different social networks to promote the particular interests of their children in terms of their future educational and social outcomes, is explored. The ability to make successful use of such networks depends on many factors. Among others one of the most important is the presence of the 'right' parental cultural capital that allows parents to engage in a process of successful involvement in these networks. Parents who have the right knowledge will have the ability to interpret the right sources of information of 'how the game is played'. And when they are able to decode and successfully comply with the rules of the game they will inevitably be in a position to secure more advantages for their children. The presence of the 'right' cultural capital may offer advantages to young people by enhancing the returns of *social capital*. It is to the social capital that I will turn after some conclusions have been made from reviewing previous studies on cultural capital.

The way different studies operationalised the concept of cultural capital raises many methodological and conceptual issues. By addressing these issues and by pointing to possible shortcomings of the application of different approaches to cultural capital, the researcher who makes use of the concept of cultural capital can be conscious of the exploratory potentials of this concept. In the present study, for example, cultural capital is examined as part of the family resources that affect (intentionally or unintentionally) possible outcomes in terms of academic achievement, level of educational aspirations and choice making for post secondary school destinations. Having in mind the wide range of studies that have applied the concept of cultural capital in empirical research, a decision was made to adopt a broad operationalisation of cultural capital, approaching it in smaller empirical aspects. To go about researching it, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research techniques was thought to offer an all round perspective into how cultural capital operates at different levels. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

2.3.3 Social capital theory

In the previous section, cultural capital was presented as a non-monetary form of capital that can potentially influence an individual's prospects in education in terms of academic achievement and choice making regarding future educational and occupational outcomes. In this section, another form of non-monetary capital that may potentially influence choice making in educational and occupational contexts is examined. This resource refers to social networks and connections, which families can potentially utilise in order to secure both real and symbolic returns for their children. This is what this study refers to as *social capital*.

Generally speaking social capital refers to social networks and the reciprocities that arise from them, which depending on where they are located, may produce outcomes to individuals at group or community level. Where positive, these outcomes emerge through involvement and participation in social networks. Like other forms of capital, social capital makes possible the achievement of certain ends that would not have been possible without its presence as a resource, not only for individual and

collective action but also as a structural context with possible unintended consequences.

The term 'social capital' appears to have acquired a central position in contemporary social theory partly because of the focus that the well-known American theorist Robert Putnam has brought to it. Even though the idea of social networks producing positive benefits to individuals and groups is not new, it seems that a renewed enthusiasm has been found through the concept of social capital. Wall et al (1998) demonstrate the fact that the concept of 'social capital' has become quite fashionable by reporting the findings of a key word search that they did in 1996 for the period 1981 to 1995 which showed an impressive increase in the number of graduate dissertations employing the concept of social capital and of journal articles listing social capital as an identifier from 1991-1995. Moreover, Portes (1998) characterises social capital as the most popular export from sociological theory into everyday language. There are many reasons why social capital attracts the interest of social scientists. Portes (1998) mentions that the novelty and heuristic power of social capital, though it is not really a new idea to sociologists, comes from the fact that it focuses attention on the positive consequences of sociability and from the fact that it gives recognition to the fact that non-monetary forms of capital can be important sources of power and influence. On the same issue, Wall et al (1998) argue that social capital has become popular because it connects to well-established sociological concepts and theories while at the same time, promises a new and potentially fruitful linkage to other disciplines that use the idea of capital. Also, the social capital theory has a versatile character, as can be shown by the different ways in which it has been interpreted and used in social analysis. Moreover, they argue that the meaning and the significance of social capital are easily conveyed to non-academic audiences.

The fact that social capital has become so popular and applied in many different contexts should make social scientists exercise care when using this concept as an analytical tool. It is essential that social scientists who want to apply the concept of social capital in empirical research, be aware of the different interpretations of the term and specify from the very beginning the definition and the perspective from

which they are approaching it. So, it is essential from the very beginning to offer a definition of what is meant by the term *social capital*.

i. Defining social capital

In the literature referring to the contemporary usage of the term social capital in the social sciences, one can easily distinguish three approaches among others. These come from Bourdieu (1986, 1990), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000). Social capital as used in this study is mostly associated with the works of Bourdieu (1977, 1986) and Coleman (1988). Central to this strategy is agreement with Portes' (1998) assertion that the greatest theoretical promise of social capital lies at the individual level exemplified by the analyses of Bourdieu and Coleman¹² but also in Putnam's conceptualisation of social capital as a 'private good'. By this, I mean that in the present study the intention is to approach social capital as an individual and family resource, which individuals may use to secure potential benefits in education and in their pursuit for better social outcomes in the status attainment process. Having said that, even though potential benefits that social capital may bring to the larger community, in the way Putnam approached social capital as 'public good' is not explored, social capital as a structural property that is located in the relations between people and institutions is examined. As such, I feel this approach can offer a sound understanding of the strategies that individuals employ and the choices that they make in order to derive potential social advantages.

The first most widely acknowledged analysis of social capital comes from Bourdieu. He defines social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual relationship and understanding' (1986). Social capital is not a natural given and is constructed and maintained through strategies involving the conversion of economic and cultural capital. All forms of capital are used to provide maximum accumulation of social profits. In other words, individuals need to actively strive to build and maintain their social networks through employing financial resources (economic capital) or cultural knowledge, language, taste, inclination, credentials, etc. (cultural capital). The amount and the quality of the social networks an individual can potentially mobilise are very important in the relative outcomes that

¹² Even though Portes (1998) sees 'nothing intrinsically wrong with redefining it [social capital] as a

they can offer. For example, lower class networks may be as plentiful and varied as middle class ones, but less productive for social and economic outcomes. Their differential 'profitability' lies in the 'quality' of the networks and the potential gateways to which they can offer access. For Bourdieu social capital is a form of capital, which, along with economic and cultural capital, determines an individual's social position and power. People use their accumulated capital to maintain their social standing or improve it through investment to maximise the opportunities of their offspring. The different forms of capital are in an inter-connected set of relations that help to constitute differentiation of social structure. Just as the other forms of capital, help in the building and maintaining of social capital, through social capital individuals may gain access to economic resources (increase their economic capital) and also increase their cultural capital, for instance through contacts with experts or accessibility to institutions that confer valued credentials (institutionalised cultural capital).

Coleman (1988: S98) defines social capital by its function. He states that social capital 'is not a single entity but a variety of different entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspects of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors within the structure'. From Coleman's perspective, social capital is useful for describing the actions of actors in social systems. The denser and closer the relational ties in the system, the greater the likelihood that information that provides a basis for action will be communicated. For Coleman, as for Bourdieu, social capital is an individual asset but it is socially constituted and its value arises as an emergent property of the collective world, which is different from each of the other forms of capital. Baron et al (2000:7) write that 'in much of his analysis, Coleman shared marked similarities with Bourdieu, including ... a concern for social capital as a source of educational advantage'. But unlike Bourdieu, Baron et al continue, he saw the creation of social capital as a largely unintended process. Coleman's analysis of the possible uses of social capital for the creation of human capital¹³ and the acquisition of educational credentials brings into focus a link between social capital, other forms of capital, habitus and education. For Coleman (1988: S110) social capital embodied in family relations is important for a child's

structural property of large aggregates.'

¹³ Portes (1998) notes that the closest equivalent to Coleman's *human capital* is Bourdieu's *embodied cultural capital*.

intellectual development because it allows parental human capital to be communicated to the children. Thus social capital becomes a source of influencing the education of children just as financial and human capital do. The social capital that exists outside the family, among parents and in parents' relations with institutions of the community also has value for influencing the educational prospects of children (Coleman, 1988: S113). Using data from an empirical study with Catholic and private schools in the U.S. he showed that the presence of this latter form of social capital had positive influences in reducing the drop out rate among secondary school students.

A third approach that takes social capital at the community level is the one proposed by Putnam. According to Putnam (2000:19) social capital refers to connections among individuals (social networks) and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. Social capital is different from other forms of capital such as physical, human and cultural capital because it has an element that has been called 'civic virtue', which is an intrinsic element of a 'healthy' society whereas the other forms of capital refer to properties of individuals. For Putnam social capital can be simultaneously a 'private good' and a 'public good'. The different approaches to social capital indicate, for Putnam, that 'social capital has both an individual and a collective aspect' (Ibid.). Individuals form connections that benefit their own interests, the most important of which is finding a job and advancing in their careers. At the same time social capital has 'externalities' that affect the wider community. When the members of the community are well connected then the benefits for a well-connected individual would be greater than in a social context where the community is poorly connected (2000:20). For Putnam, social capital basically means features of social organisations such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate action and co-operation for mutual benefit. Social capital is necessary for a healthy civic community to be prosperous and efficient. For Putnam, networks involve mutual obligations and the element of reciprocity. 'I'll do this for you now in the expectation that you will return the favour'. To illustrate this Putnam cites a witticism by the American character Yogi Berra that refers to reciprocity: 'If you don't go to somebody's funeral, they won't come to yours'. For Putnam, when you do something for somebody (offer a favour) an expectation is created that this offering or favour might be returned in some way or another should the proper conditions arise. Of

course, it is not always as instrumental as this. It is not always the case that individuals consciously premeditate their actions in order to create outstanding obligations, that can later be drawn upon in their pursuit of different social goals. However, there are cases when individuals consciously invest in their relations with other people in the sense that they create stock to trade later on. The example of the trader in the Kahl El Khalili market of Cairo that Coleman (1988) mentions is characteristic of the above point. When the trader is asked by a customer for something that he himself does not trade in, he volunteers to take the customer to friends' stores and by doing so he creates an obligation for future reference. This obligation may be 'cashed in' when a similar favour is returned.

According to Stanton-Salazar (1997) the value of social capital as a concept lies in the fact that it identifies properties of social structure that are available to be used by actors to achieve their interests. Social capital can be a social resource for individuals and at the same time it can be a collective social resource that may be mobilized to promote the general interests of the community. Rather than examining social capital at community level, the focus of this study is on social capital seen as an individual/family resource that influence the shaping of young people's aspirations about their future and influence the making of choices regarding future educational and occupational outcomes because it is a resource that has immense value in the context of the Cypriot society.

ii. Social capital as a resource facilitating educational/status attainment processes

As in the case of the application of the concept of cultural capital in empirical research, which raised many issues, the increasing application of social capital in research, which relates to wider educational processes, also raises issues that need to be addressed. In a review of recent empirical literature on the application of the concept of social capital in research, Portes (1998:9) identified several areas where social capital has been applied. These include, among others: school attrition and academic performance, children's intellectual development, sources of employment and occupational attainment etc. This suggests that social capital has a versatile character and if clearly defined may be used as an empirical tool to investigate educational processes at different levels.

Portes (ibid.) distinguished three basic functions of social capital: a) as a source of social control, b) as a source of family support and c) as a source of benefits through extra-familial networks. These functions of social capital point to the fact that it can have effects at different levels. In the present study, social capital is examined as a source of potential benefits for secondary school students that can arise from social relationships and networks outside the family. It will also be argued that social capital serves as a source of generating the appropriate *habitus* towards choice making in education. In other words, social capital could be the source of *real* and *symbolic* profits for its possessor. Social capital, then, is seen as a resource that can potentially offer positive effects at two levels: (a) As a resource that is the product of engagement in social networks that families can mobilise to secure *real* advantages, e.g. social goods in the form of information, access to certain institutions, favourable treatment etc. (b) Also, it is a resource that can potentially offer *symbolic* profits in the sense that it allows for the cultivation of a system of positive dispositions (*habitus*) and confidence towards educational, and ultimately social, success. These dispositions, for example, may be generating incentives for putting effort into schoolwork if one knows that at the end of their educational journey there would be the ‘means’ to valorise academic qualifications in the labour market through the family’s networks.

- Empirical studies that applied the concept of social capital in educational and status attainment processes

Social capital as a source of benefits through extra familial networks (as derived from Bourdieu’s and Coleman’s definitions of social capital) and as a source of family support (as derived from Coleman’s writings) has been applied in several studies. Some examined the influence of social capital in status attainment. Granovetter¹⁴ was one of the first researchers to use the concept of social capital even though he did not label it as such. Granovetter drew attention to the ‘strength of weak ties’ to refer to the power of indirect influences outside the immediate circle of the family and close friends to serve as an informal employment referral system. Similarly, Lin et al (1981) were another group of researchers that applied the concept of ‘social capital’, even though they did not label it as such, to study status attainment. They found that

¹⁴ Cited in Portes (1998), Granovetter MS (1974) *Getting a Job: A Study of Contacts and Careers*. Cambridge, MA:Harvard University Press. Cited in Portes (1998:12)

among 400 employed males in Albany, New York when social networks were mobilised, their attainment status was affected beyond and after accounting for parental status and education effects.

Other studies examined the role of social capital in educational processes. In the study by Gewirtz et al (1995) in Britain (mentioned in the previous section), parents that were characterised as 'privileged choosers' were found to possess and mobilise their social capital. This social capital took the form of networks and relationships, which allowed them to access sources of information about schools, teachers, etc. and thus be better informed when making the best possible selection for their children's education. Parents who possessed the 'right' social and cultural capital were in a better position to influence their children's future outcomes in the educational field more positively. This study points to interesting interconnections between parental social and cultural capital. These are issues, which this study takes seriously into account in subsequent chapters and particularly in the analysis of the data.

Studies of social capital have been carried out to examine whether it had any effects on school achievement and in shaping the aspirations of students. Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) examined the role of social capital in Mexican-origin high school students' grades and educational and occupational expectations in San Francisco. Social capital was defined as 'social relationships with institutional agents', such as teachers and guidance counsellors, from which an individual is potentially able to derive various types of institutional resources and support, for example, guidance for college admission or job advancement. The findings of their research suggested that there was a relation between students' social capital and grades and status expectation. However, they found that the strongest association of the latter (grades and status expectation) was with bilingualism. Bilingualism, though, may be considered as a proxy measure of cultural capital. In any case, their findings suggest that there was a strong influence of students' cultural capital with their relative achieved grades and status expectation. Social capital defined as 'social relationships with networks, institutions, centre powers etc.' located outside schools (and associated with bilingualism) may offer the prospect for these resources to be available for future reference. This may shape a situation where a certain kind of

habitus may grow. This *habitus* of the well connected, the network-rich, would allow individuals to set higher goals and commit themselves further to the educational processes if they felt that at the end of their educational route they would be able to “exchange” their academic achievement for a preferably prestigious position in the labour market.

Social capital defined in the way suggested above, as social networks outside the educational field but affecting educational processes, has been examined by Wong (1998). Wong’s study (1998) investigated the importance of social capital for the educational attainment of children in socialist Czechoslovakia. He defined social capital as social relationships and networks outside the family that can be used to establish favourable conditions (e.g. social relationships with institutional agents) for engaging and advancing in the educational system. In particular, he operationalised social capital as membership of the Communist Party since as he put it ‘the concentration of economic, political, and ideological power made the Party a major instrument of the social distribution of resources and inequality’ (1998:5). He found that there was a relationship between political affiliation and children’s education measured by the level of education reached suggesting that social networks generating from involvement with the communist party had several positive effects on children’s education.

Social capital as a source of positive outcomes in education when the state system failed minority children was demonstrated by Mirza and Reay’s (2000) study of a group of Black women in Britain. These women worked hard to generate a sense of community and develop social capital out of friends’ and neighbours’ social relationships. This group of Black women participated both as mothers and as educators in supplementary schools, which helped provide support for their children in an environment of increasing social and educational exclusion. These supplementary schools functioned with the intention of providing quality education to black children who were being failed by the formal educational system. This points to the positive effects of involvement in social networks, but most importantly when possible, creating social networks that may function as a safety net for groups that are marginalized from the mainstream education system. Here one may see the function of social capital as offering some sort of protection to individuals and social

groups. This aspect of social capital is noteworthy and it would be interesting to see if, in the present study, families in disadvantaged social positions draw support from networks and are empowered by them to compensate for the shortcomings of the system.

iii. Social capital and habitus

Given the many fields where social capital has been applied it is not surprising that there are many conceptualisations of social capital (see above section). This has consequences for obtaining suitable measures of the concept. Baron et al (2001: 26-31) in their critical review of the concept of social capital and its application in empirical research mention that because of the fact that social capital has been defined in many diverse ways it is inevitable that there would be heterogeneity of measures. Thus, there are no universal measures of social capital. The measures depend on the conceptualisation that each researcher gives to the concept. Here Baron et al (2001) point to the issue of validity of the measurements used in the sense that the variables that are used to operationalise social capital need to measure what they are supposed to measure. As for the methods used, Baron et al appear to be sceptical of the use of sophisticated regressions and statistical models and they plead for an appropriate mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches. They defend that plea by giving the example of measurement of ‘associational life’ – which can be described as an appropriate indicator of social capital. They state the following:

Grossing up the numbers of organisations to which people belong tell us very little about the strength of social capital if it is not accompanied by information on two scores: what people actually do as members of an association, and how far this relates to public as well as private goods (2001:27).

The above is given serious consideration in the examination of social capital in the present study and it is an issue that is discussed further in the methods chapter (Chapter 5). Briefly to this point, the need to investigate in depth the concept point to adopting primarily a qualitative approach, though some secondary quantitative measures were also considered.

In this study, social capital refers to the social networks available to parents that could potentially be used to provide educational advantages and thus facilitate educational and occupational choice. Social capital as a non-monetary resource along

with and in conjunction with cultural capital are seen as being capable of generating the 'right' *habitus* which plays a critical role in the decision making process in education. This, of course, depends heavily on the social context within which they are located. It is this social context that is examined in the next chapter.

2.4 Summary

This chapter presented a framework for the analysis of the ways, with which the decisions that are made in relation to future educational and occupational outcomes may be approached using concepts such as that of *habitus* and cultural and social capital. It was ascertained that cultural and social capital as family resources could form an environment for a certain *habitus* to be shaped which in turn influences the choices that young people and their families make for their post secondary education destinations. This has implications for class and gender structuring opportunities for choice making about post secondary school destinations.

The issue of the way choices are made in education is highlighted in the debate between two apparently alternative perspectives in sociology that offer explanations as to what determines social action. On the one hand, there are the 'Rational action' theorists who argue the human action is the product of rational choices made by individuals who occupy different social positions in an unequal society. On the other hand, there are the structuralists who argue that individual behaviour is regulated by the social structures of the society where the individual is located by structuring particular opportunities for 'choice'. Using Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus*, *field* and the different forms of capital that can be used to facilitate individual action and explain collective outcomes, it is argued that the above competing perspectives could be synthesised by adopting an approach that regards individuals as being able to make pragmatic choices within a framework for action that is shaped by the available resources that their family may potentially use in a particular *field*. The ideas of two forms of family resources or family capital other than economic capital, namely, cultural and social capital, are presented and it is argued that they could provide useful conceptual tools for examining the contexts, which explain significant aspects of how decisions are taken. The institution of family and its reproductive role is seen in respect of the broader socio-economic and cultural practices of the social surroundings. Sociologically, the family is not seen as an independent institution

isolated from the broader socio-economic practices and beliefs of the society within which it functions. Family resources are being used (invested) intentionally or may function in an unintended way and have the possibility of offering social profits for relative success in secondary education by creating an environment for choices to be made by students graduating from secondary schools in relation to their post-school destinations and educational outcomes. The way that they facilitate the making of these choices is by influencing the shaping of a particular '*habitus*' towards the perceived social goals by positively influencing educational outcomes.

The particular manner, with which family resources influence the structuring of educational choice making, and thus the life chances of an individual, is directly connected with issues of class and gender. Social class connects with the way different resources are made available to families from different social class positions. Gender influences the life chances of an individual because of the differences in the way different people perceive the role of men and women in society and thus the different expectations that society attaches to men and women which, on occasion, may lead to making different prioritisations as to what men and women could aim to achieve socially. All these create a cultural and institutional environment for choices to be made, what Hodgkinson describes as 'horizons for action' within which the individual and his/her family exercise their choice making.

The social setting is vital for understanding the way non-monetary resources are mobilised in the *field* of choice making in education. Next, an examination of the Cypriot society that constitutes the environment where the particular social and cultural capital function, is carried out. The social, economic and cultural development of Cyprus throughout the past century has shaped the framework where these resources gain value and may be understood as part of the way families perceive possible measures to secure advantages for their children. The route from being a *traditional* society to a society that claims to be moving along the route to modernisation (often in turbulent political circumstances) shapes the contemporary social environment where the different resources, as well as issues relating to gender acquire value and meaning. Within this environment the educational system has been functioning and developing in response to and because of the overall societal changes being made.

Chapter 3:

The social context for choice making in education: The case of Cyprus

3.1 Introduction

One may argue that ‘we are the products of our choices’ (Foskett & Hemsley-Brown, 2001:1). Many of the choices we make play little or no part in the way our overall life develops. There are moments, however, when the choices we make (or do not make) have major impacts in our life and in our pathway from childhood and adolescence to adulthood because they connect with structural dynamics of social context. Choice making regarding future educational and/or occupational trajectories at the end of secondary schooling is one such important moment in the lives of most young people. These decisions are heavily influenced by environmental structures that consist of political, social, cultural and economic arenas at local and national level and, in our focus i.e. secondary school students in Cyprus, are taken largely within the family, which is located within, and mediates, these structures. The outcomes reflect and symbolise relative success and failure and draw attention to the theme: is all this fair and equitable? Thus, by making sense of the choices and the decisions that young people and their families make for their futures and the processes whereby these are made it is hoped that a better understanding will be offered of the current situation of social justice in the Cypriot society.

3.2 The issue of modernisation

Educational choice making in Cyprus, as other social activity, takes place within the context of what many characterise as a modernising society. The Cypriot society¹ is a society that underwent a process of rapid growth and development, which began during the 1930’s and accelerated after 1960 (the year of Independence) reaching a stage whereby it is classified among the 25 ‘richest’ nations² (Panayiotopoulos, 1995:57). This process transformed the Cypriot society from a pre-modern traditional

¹ When reference to ‘Cypriot’ society is made after 1974 it would mostly refer to the Greek Cypriot society.

society to a society that today exhibits many characteristics found in developed Western societies in its economy and in its social and political organisation³. At the same time, however, many features of pre-modern attitudes and practices, for example, relating to how social relations and gender issues are perceived, are still present among many 'modern' Cypriots. Part of the reason why this has happened is because whereas in the West the transition to modernity was a cumulative process of two or three centuries whereby 'old habits, old patterns of authority, old relationships and old values were challenged, disrupted and replaced' (Shipman, 1971:13), in Cyprus the transition to modernity has been a process that unfolded in just three generations, as a product of a systematically pursued effort by governments. Because cultural patterns change less quickly than political and economic phenomena there have been complex processes involving the co-existence (and in some cases conflict) of modern and traditional perspectives and practices⁴.

In this new and fluid environment interesting issues are raised and in this context one can trace the actions of individuals and families in order to secure the best possible outcomes out of the educational opportunities that are on offer. The social conditions that exist particularly in the educational system shape the life chances of many young individuals. In such a social environment, individuals and families from different social positions are inclined to make choices based on their attitudes and beliefs relating to the way they view social relations and their positions within this environment. Issues such as that of social class and gender inevitably come into focus as they define individuals' positions in the changing social structure. Choice-making regarding post secondary school educational and occupational destinations will be viewed in this changing environment.

The previous chapter presented a theoretical framework, which considered non-monetary forms of family resources, namely cultural and social capital, as primary mechanisms, which along with economic capital can influence educational processes and outcomes. This section examines the historical formation of the present social and cultural conditions in Cyprus where these non-monetary forms of capital are

² By World Bank per capita income ranking.

³ The development of Cyprus in the political, economic and social spheres is presented in Appendix A.

⁴ An example of this is the use of *mesa*, which as will be argued later, could be viewed through a traditional, modern or mixed perspective.

located; where the development of different 'ideologies' have been shaped that refer to social class and gender issues. Moreover, it presents the development and the present state of the educational system where the choices for post secondary school destinations are being made in order to establish the context for the present empirical investigation.

3.2.1 Ideologies for making choices in education: Social relations and gender

The transition of the country from traditional forms of organisation around the Cypriot village to modernisation and the developments in the political domain were particularly influential for the shaping of education in its present form. This transition to modernity was also constituted by the enactment of different ideologies that concern social relations and social processes. One such process refers to the pursuit of education. Persiannis (1972) argues that in the context of Cyprus, parents consider it to be their duty to provide their children with as much education as possible with the expectation that they will have better life opportunities and better living conditions than they have had. Also, the costs and the sacrifices that accompany higher studies are often outweighed by perceptions of the future benefits that education may offer (Eliophotou, 1995).

There are also cultural forces that influence the collective demand for more education. These cultural factors can be traced to the legacy of the Ancient Greek world and civilisation, a legacy that as Argyrou (1995) points out, modern Cypriots are more than keen to draw upon as the genuine descendants of that tradition. In the classical Greek world the knowledge of theory was considered to be superior to the knowledge of practical skills. Education was pursued for its own value. Also, in more recent periods during the Ottoman and British rule the individuals who had some kind of education, (priests, bishops, teachers) rose above the illiterate masses (farmers, labourers, craftsmen unskilled workers) and were considered the natural leaders of the community. As Vakis (1990) points out, it is often argued in the Greek speaking world that the more educated a person is the more this is taken to be a mark of a 'civilised' person.

As the Cypriot society moved down the path of modernisation there has been a shift

in the prioritisation and the value given to education. The very process of modernisation itself appeared to some (i.e. the traditional elites whose orientation is the Greek Orthodox Christian world which has its roots in the Byzantine tradition), as a loss of the Cypriot 'true' identity (Argyrou, 1995:178-180). On the other hand, to a part of the newly formed middle classes which developed next to and parallel to the old and traditional 'elites' and much of which consists of people educated in European, mostly British and to a lesser degree American universities, the process of modernisation meant more or less an effort to be culturally identified with Europe⁵. This, among other things, meant the adoption of practices, institutions and ideologies that were 'European'⁶.

These perspectives influence the ways, the role and the significance attached to education. Thus, education is prioritised in different ways. For the 'modernist' tradition, education must be sought for its utilitarian value as stock, as an asset that could be exchanged in the labour market. For the 'traditionalist' viewpoint education must be sought for its liberal/humanitarian value (Persianis, 1972)⁷. Consequently, the way contemporary Cypriot families approach educational processes relating to their children, but more importantly, the way they inform their strategies for getting the best possible outcomes from the educational system, are inevitably influenced by elements of these perspectives. Traditional and modern perspectives influence the way social relations and gender issues are perceived in relation to issues of social advancement.

⁵ This change was accompanied by changes in the ways of life, habits, customs etc and sparked an ideological clash between the two perspectives endorsed by different sections of the social spectrum. The traditional perspective, regards traditional values, customs, practices and habits as the genuine identity of Cypriots and it is mostly endorsed by the working classes, the rural population and the 'old' middle classes. The other perspective regards European/Western values, customs, practices and habits as modern and as the picture that corresponds better to the newfound 'European' identity of Cypriots and is mostly endorsed by the urban 'new' middle classes. Having said that one should expect to find elements of both perspectives in working, rural, urban, 'new' and 'old' middle classes. Argyrou (1995) sketches this process and this ideological conflict very vividly when he demonstrates the presence of traditional and modern elements in the way Cypriots celebrate their weddings.

⁶ 'Europe' is a label, an ideal to which the Cypriot society aims in an effort to appear 'modern'. This can be very easily observed in everyday discourse in the public and private spheres. For the media, the press, the politicians etc. Europe sets the standards of 'quality', 'rationality' and 'progress' (Argyrou, 1995:48,49). Argyrou argues that for Cypriots the adoption of a Eurocentric ideology is done in an effort to shake off the Turkish/Ottoman influences (and thus Middle Eastern-backward traditions) and claim a place among modern European nations (Ibid:50).

⁷ This clash had been ongoing for many years (particularly during the period 1960-70) and was a central issue in the debates as to which educational policies the newly independent state should adopt, according to Persianis (1972).

The move towards modernisation was followed by the opening of the structure of opportunities whereby many prospects were created for upward social mobility and advancement. This was due to the reshaping of the class structure and the shift away from the agricultural mode of organisation of the economy and the focus mostly on the services sector. It is safe to assume that as the route to modernisation was coming to an 'end' in the sense that the transformation of the economy and society was achieved, the social structures would tend to be consolidated. Thus it is highly likely that the structure of opportunities would move towards 'closing up', because the opportunities available before, during the transitional period, would start to 'shrink' as the new white-collar middle class positions would have been filled. In this context one should be ready to examine how the changing structures of opportunities affect students (male and female) from different social class backgrounds and the way the students and their families deal with this change with the different resources they have available to use. This examination in this 'new' environment should take into consideration modern as well as traditional attitudes, which as commented on before, are present and influence social processes.

Let us first examine the ideologies that govern social relations, and in particular, social advancement. In advanced capitalist societies, when it comes to the issue of allocation to future occupational and social positions one should expect to come across the dominance of a meritocratic logic in society which leads to the development of values and ideologies that connect to ideas such as 'dredging of the pool of talent'. In other words, one expects to come across a discourse of 'meritocratic procedures' of acquisition of credentials and of individual social advancement⁸. This 'modernist' approach of looking at social relations in Cyprus regards Europe as the place where such 'institutions' and practices originate and it is there that those who adhere to this modernist mode of thought see the future of Cyprus. Thus, for individuals who strive to achieve socially, one of the better ways to accomplish this is through the attainment of sound educational qualifications that would objectively 'certify' the merits of the potential candidate for a position.

⁸ Having said that, I am of course, aware of the fact that one may rightly argue that such ideological discourses are often used to disguise class inequalities in advanced capitalist societies. It is often argued that these discourses allow for the social institutions where the above are produced and reproduced, namely the schools and the educational system, to become the primary covert mechanisms of social reproduction. Nevertheless, this discourse is present; it is often dominant and provides the basis of widely accepted perception of how individuals perceive social reality.

In contrast to the above way of perceiving social relations and procedures for social advancement, in the Cypriot society there is a traditional pre-modern attitude whereby social relations are viewed in another way. According to this mode of thought, educational or other credentials are means that are used in personalistic strategies for securing access to resources that include, for instance, access to different power centres. What is an accepted practice by many is that individuals are legitimised to make attempts to achieve access to powerful patronage networks or other social networks and thus secure, on a personalistic basis, favours and preferable treatment. The ability to secure access to patronage or other networks on a personalistic basis is unequally distributed between social groups and within social groups. This unequal distribution of access to social networks and to the flow of privileges provides clear distinctions between the privileged class positions in the society and others less privileged in that respect. Furthermore, people who adhere to these attitudes and the practices that go with them, would be resistant to the 'modernist' attitude of meritocratic procedures, as practices relating to the seeking of securing advantages on the basis of 'who you know' and not on 'who you are' would tend to make, for instance, their social capital resources irrelevant and thus they would be less able to compete on the social arena. This should be viewed as part of the ways different social groups try to position themselves in an environment where class consolidation imposes an arena for antagonisms for privileged social positions. This inevitably has consequences for the life chances of individuals from different social backgrounds who are differentially bestowed by resources that are beneficial for this antagonism. An area where this is manifested is at the point of choice making at the end of secondary education whereby the consequences of these choices connect to the way the various prospects of students are shaped.

Traditional and modern attitudes, which refer to gender issues and particularly to the role of women in the contemporary Cypriot society, also appear to influence the life chances of young individuals. The traditional view sees women as being primarily mothers, wives, supporters of the traditional Cypriot family values of raising children. If a woman can accommodate the above role and contribute to the family income it is considered be a bonus for her family and not a primary objective on her part. Her potential working life, in other words, should not get in the way of fulfilling

her other role of a mother and child carer. The modern approach to the role of the woman in the Cypriot society sees her as an individual with similar potentials and rights in the workplace as men. According to this view a woman should be a partner in a household sharing equal responsibilities with her husband. Moreover, she should have the same opportunities as men in all areas of social life, which include similar educational prospects. Whether a family adheres to one mode of thought or to the other has consequences for the way available resources are invested for the future of their sons and daughters.

The ideologies that are present in contemporary Cyprus have effects on the way different families go about influencing the future of their children. The way they view social relations and gender issues can influence the development and the adoption of different strategies in order to promote the interests of their children.

3.3 The value of education in the Greek Cypriot society

3.3.1 The development of education in Cyprus

Up to 1960 the Greek-Orthodox church held a significant influence over Greek Cypriot education, as indeed did the Muslim dogma over the Turkish Cypriot population and education. The religious differences sustained the national divisions between the two communities.

During the nineteenth century the percentage of educated people in Cyprus was very small. The number of schools (primary) in 1881, three years after the British arrived in the island, was just 99 for a population of around 200 000. The number of schools, however, increased steadily during the early twentieth century and very rapidly after the Second World War. In 1901 they were 273 for a population of 250 000 and in 1950, 561 for a population of 450 000. The English Director of Education, Dr G. F. Sleight, described this ‘explosion’ in education in the ‘Report of the Department of Education’ for the school years 1942-45 saying that because parents were having increased earnings they were able to meet, the comparatively low, costs of education (Persianis, 1972).

After the British crushed the voices calling for *Enosis* following the events of 1931 (see Appendix A) they introduced new legislation in an attempt to centralise and anglicise the education system. Primary education came under the direct control of the colonial Government. It appointed teachers, paid their salaries and controlled the curriculum. Also, the British established a Teacher Training college in the town of Morphou in 1937 to train Greek and Turkish Cypriot teachers in English. Greek Cypriot secondary education, on the other hand, remained under the control of the Church. During the 40s and the 50s secondary education had one specific goal: inculcating national ideals and strengthening the national conscience. This goal was very important for the church leaders and the nationalists because they saw secondary education, which was outside government control, as a means by which the Greek Cypriot nationalistic goals could be achieved. The Church supported education morally and financially. During the Struggle for independence (1955-59) Greek Cypriot schools became a strong source of resistance against the British and this is demonstrated by the fact that a number of the resistance fighters killed or executed by the British authorities were of school age, mainly boys in secondary education.

When Cyprus became independent, education became even more important, not only for the country's political leadership but also for the parents. The expectations both on the part of parents and on the part of political parties and groups rose enormously. The parents saw education as the path which would lead their children to better employment and improvement of their status. Farmers and working class parents aspired to help their children raise their socio-economic status by securing a 'white collar' job. Middle class parents sought to help their children become professionals and senior civil servants and upper class people wanted their children to enter the newly established diplomatic service or have access to the highest posts of political power. These aspirations, together with the gradual emancipation of women led to a high level of demand for education on the part of parents. Thus the educational system both expanded rapidly and became embedded in the social structuring of opportunities for socio-economic destinations (Persiannis, 1972).

One can argue that independence marked a shift in the value and expectations that the Greek Cypriot society had of education. During the years of foreign rule (Ottoman, British) education was, for the Greek Cypriots, a cultural-political 'weapon' (see

Appendix A). It was a means of protecting their religious and cultural identity and a vehicle through which to promote their national aspirations. Later (after 1960), it became a means for professional and social advancement (Persiannis, 1994). However, there were always those who, even after independence, regarded education as a means for promoting political goals (cultural identification with Greece with the ultimate goal of *enosis*). This often sparked off conflicts with ‘progressive’ elements in the Cypriot society; people, usually technocrats, who adopted a modernist perspective of the role of education in a modern society, were usually market driven and saw education as a means to promote economic and social goals. The leading representative of this modernist trend was the Minister of Labour and Social Securities during the 60’s who conflicted with the traditionalist/nationalist tradition expressed by the Minister of Education during the same period (Persiannis, 1972). For further discussion see Section 3.3.4.

3.3.2 Education as a cultural-political ‘resource’

Formal education has always occupied a central role in the Cypriot society and was seen at different times as a means to serve different goals. Education, had for a long time, been regarded by the Greek Cypriot elites, namely the Church, as a ‘vehicle’ through which political and national aims could be promoted. It was seen as the primary means for preserving the national identity and culture of the Greek Cypriots. During the British colonial rule, for instance, the Church and the nationalists saw education, and schools in particular, as the vehicle through which they could organise the anti-colonial struggle. Later, after the independence and throughout the period 1960-74 many nationalists saw education as the means through which cultural identification with Greece could be achieved that would lead to the ultimate goal of union (‘*enosis*’) with Greece. At the same time it was an arena for ideological class struggles. It was the newfound medium that the new elite who had begun to form independently of the traditional elite (Church) could utilise to guarantee their social advancement and social reproduction. After 1974, as the ‘*enosis*’ goal was abandoned, education was seen by the political leadership of the country as the means through which the aims of cultivating the inspiration of resistance against the occupation of the northern part of the island and the memory of the lost villages and towns could be promoted. Throughout these developments, perspectives were changing and people began to expect and to more actively pursue for more education

in an attempt to achieve social advancement as it became more realisable for all citizens.

As indicated above during the British colonial rule in Cyprus, the Church and the political class affiliated to it considered education as a vehicle through which political and nationalistic aims could be promoted. The Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus, which had direct influence over educational matters, saw education, and schools in particular, as the vehicle by which it could organise the anti-colonial struggle and thus promote its goal that was the union of Cyprus with Greece (*enosis*). The British reacted to this and tried to put the educational system under their direct control. They partially achieved this when they managed to take control of primary education whereby the teachers were appointed and the curriculum was set by them. The secondary education, however, remained firmly under the control of the Greek Orthodox Church.

For the Greek Cypriot elite, who were then directly linked with the Church, the educational system functioned as a starting-point and as a means towards the restoration of their social hegemony, which had been threatened and undermined by the British, and the internal political situation. According to Choisi (1995) the Greek Cypriot elite managed in spite of, or rather, because of the British colonial policy to use the educational system as the most important medium through which to impart its *panhellenistic* norms and values.

After independence and throughout the period from 1960-74 many nationalists saw education as the means through which cultural identification with Greece could be achieved. The nationalists in Cyprus wanted the Cypriot system to identify itself with that of Greece as many of them saw the establishment of the Cypriot state as a temporary solution to the Cyprus issue, whose final solution as they envisioned it would be the union (*enosis*) with Greece. Some progressive minded people, however, (such as the Minister of Labour and Social Securities in the 60's) had a different opinion to that of the nationalist educationalists (such as the Minister of Education in the 60's) who promoted the idea of classical education and argued that education should undergo the necessary changes that would allow it to respond to what they argued were the real socio-economic needs of the country. *Progressive* educators and

intellectuals on education pressed for changes and reforms. Among their suggestions were the establishment of more vocational and technical schools that would give the country the necessary workforce that would assist its development. However, the technical education was doomed to failure from the beginning. The mentality of the majority of Cypriots rejected manual work as being inferior, something which was mostly a reflection of traditional values and attitudes. Persiannis (1972:183) argues that these attitudes were the result of the great emphasis that was put on the teaching of humanities in the secondary schools, something that was transplanted from the Greek mainland. Persiannis also notes that there was a deep prejudice against manual work and there was a profound belief that vocational or manual training was not a task of the school. In other words 'educated' people were considered to be those with a classical education.

The situation regarding the issue of the direction that Greek Cypriot education would follow changed after the events of 1974. After those events the political dilemma about whether Cyprus should follow its own course or not, ceased to exist. It was then clear to the dominant political will that Cyprus could not be unified with Greece and that it would develop on an independent course.

This section has examined the role of education as a cultural, ideological and political 'resource' to promote goals of various social groups in the Cypriot society at different times. This has sometimes given rise to conflicts between different schools of thought as to the direction education should follow regarding its prioritisations and focus. The way education has developed in contemporary Cyprus may be examined at two levels: At the individual level education is primarily regarded as a route to social security and social advancement. This latter function of education is examined in the next section. At the societal and community level education is considered as a foundation for the generation of prosperity through a well-trained and qualified workforce in a country, which relies heavily on the provision of services. Moreover it is widely regarded as the cornerstone for raising and/or retaining the relatively high standards of living of the general population.

3.3.3 Education as a means for social advancement in Cyprus

Cypriots have been keen towards education for a long time. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century education had been regarded as very important due to the fact that it led to comparatively remunerating ‘white collar’ jobs (mostly a primary school teacher) and a higher standard of living. Persiannis (1972) reports that until the Second World War a poor child who finished secondary school could get a post as a teacher or a civil servant and could easily join the middle class. His socio-economic status would be higher if he managed to obtain a University degree and be appointed as a secondary school teacher.

Education was, in addition, revered as learning and wisdom and educated persons were highly esteemed by the people. During the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries distinction between educated and uneducated people was taken to be as equally natural and important as the distinction between rich and poor. This does not necessarily mean that educated people were always the most well off members of society. On the contrary, there is a long tradition down from the Byzantine times of highly educated but extremely poor people (Persiannis, 1972).

The economic development of the Cypriot society and the expansion of opportunities for higher education (see Appendix A) led many secondary school, college and especially university graduates to occupy relatively good social positions, particularly in sectors such as the government, semi-public organisations and the banking sectors. This happened at a time when the services sectors were expanding at the expense of the agricultural sector that has been continually shrinking. This led a significant proportion of the population to experience intergenerational upward social mobility. Education was then directly associated with social success. However, the process of social advancement through education has not been an equal process for everybody and it has produced differential outcomes for different sections of the society. Within the Cypriot society there are mechanisms and ‘institutions’ beyond the educational system that play a significant role in materialising educational credentials and they play a role as part of the wider contexts of family-found educational practices. These mechanisms and ‘institutions’ are central in the investigation of the way students and their families go about making their choices at the end of secondary schooling today. These are discussed in the next section.

3.4 The education system today and the quest for higher education

This section presents the current situation of the educational system and examines Greek Cypriots' relation to higher education in the past and in the present. This is done in an attempt to make sense of the context within which choices are being made about possible post secondary school destinations. By looking at the significance of the different opportunities that are available to students and their families today, the different strategies that different families employ in their pursuit of the best outcomes for their children will become clear. First, the current educational system is presented followed by an examination of the structure of opportunities available to Cypriot students in the past and today. Finally, an institution that is regarded by many as paramount in most students' pursuit for higher education: *frontisteria*, is examined.

3.4.1 The education system today

The education system in Cyprus today consists of nursery education from the age of four until six, which is provided by the public sector, the private sector and the local communities; of Primary education from the age of six until twelve provided mainly by the public sector. Education up to the age of 12 became compulsory in 1962. Public secondary education includes the lower secondary school (Gymnasium) for three years, which became compulsory in the year 1992, and the upper secondary school, which includes the General Lyceums and the Technical schools for three more years. Mass attendance at both primary education and the lower secondary education was well established before the point of legal enforcement.

During the 1980s a marked change was introduced in the curriculum of upper-secondary school. It was the introduction of LEM (Lyceum of Optional Subjects). Under this arrangement, which replaced the old form of the three Lyceums (Classical, Science, Economic), students could choose one of five groups of subjects (i.e., arts, science, economics, commercial/secretarial, foreign languages) according to their future plans and interests. Parallel to the Lyceum there are the Technical schools, which offer technical and vocational courses. Two decades later this system is undergoing another reform. The "Enieo Lykio" (*Unified Lyceum*) is being introduced which offers the students the opportunity to select specific lessons and not just group

of subjects (specialisation).⁹ Approximately 80% of the students who enrol in secondary education (public and private) succeed in graduating six years later (Department of Statistics and Research, 2000). After secondary school there are different routes and possibilities that are examined in the next section.

The educational system in Cyprus, apart from the clear distinction one can make about the different class composition regarding a section of the private secondary schools (namely some English speaking schools) and public secondary education is not characterised by any other distinctive channels for middle and working class children. Today, about 10% of secondary students attend private schools. Before the events of 1974 and specifically in the year 1972 the percentage of students attending private secondary schools was 15.3. It temporarily decreased to 4-5 % in the period 1973-77 but has gradually risen since then. The decrease during 1973-77 can mainly be attributed to financial reasons in the wake of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. The oldest and most important of the English speaking schools in Cyprus is the Nicosia English School, which was established by the British in 1900. During the British rule, the school was the main recruiting source for civil service personnel (Karagiorgos, 1986:104). After independence, the school continued to function as a non-profit making institution governed by a board of governors. It has been a highly selective school run on the lines of a typical English Grammar School with the aim of preparing students intending to study in British, as well as in other, English-speaking universities.

3.4.2 The distribution of educational opportunities in the past

-Secondary education

Christodoulou (1995) indicates that class formation and social stratification in Cyprus have been influenced by the distribution of educational opportunities available in the past. In fact the professional class of the first decades of the twentieth century came mostly from the emergent mercantile or land owning families who could afford to pay for their children's education abroad. Secondary education was limited to those whose family could pay the fees, and if the family lived in a village, the cost of living in the towns where almost all the secondary schools were located.

⁹ When this research was carried out (1998-99) the LEM system was in place. The *Enieo Lyceum* was at the early stages of its experimental phase.

During the British rule secondary education was under the complete control of the Greek-Orthodox Church who were actively promoting the nationalist ideals of Hellenism. In the 1930s the colonial government, in an effort to restrain the nationalist tendencies fostered in the Greek schools introduced two measures: (a) It set up a Teachers' Training College with low fees and guaranteed jobs for the trainees and (b) took over the English School, a private school, and upgraded it to the level of a good British grammar school. The students that graduated from this school were given preference in civil service posts. A decade later when the colonial government started to grant scholarships to British universities, students who graduated from these two schools were those who were mostly chosen. These people later occupied the highly prestigious posts in the civil service and continued to hold them after independence.

As for the public school system, this remained under the aegis of the Church until 1960. After that, it was taken over first by the Greek Communal Chamber (1960-65) and then by the Ministry of Education (1965-present). The Cypriot governments since 1965 have actively pursued a number of policies for secondary education such as: the increase in the school enrolment ratio of the age group 6-17 which reached 97% in the school year 1997/98 (Department of Research and Statistics, 1999), the introduction of free secondary education for all (first introduced in 1972/73 and by 1985/86 was extended to all levels of education), the extension of compulsory education until the age of 15 (made compulsory in 1985/86) and the strengthening of Technical and Vocational education. Moreover, they introduced a number of innovations aiming at modernising the system in terms of curriculum and organisation of schools (i.e. introduction of *LEM*, and Unified Lyceums). These changes, it must be said, were always heavily influenced by changes in the Greek secondary school system. The graduates of the public secondary schools who had the opportunity mostly pursued post-secondary education in Greece for a number of reasons: a) cultural (language and way of living) b) economic (the Greek universities were free and students from poor families were able to get maintenance support. Also, the cost of living in Greece was relatively low) c) scholarships were given by the Greek government to top achievers in secondary schools.

-Higher education

For post secondary education the Greek Cypriots who had the opportunity, always relied on overseas study to obtain post-secondary qualifications up until 1992 when the University of Cyprus was established. Still, despite this development, as is discussed in Section 3.4.2, the majority of Greek Cypriot students continue to seek higher education abroad. Below a brief overview of the way Greek Cypriots have pursued higher education in the past is presented.

With the establishment of a university in Athens in 1837, many Cypriots travelled there for an education in the ‘national ideals’. Even after Cyprus came under the control of the British in 1878 Greek Cypriots continued to go to Greece for higher studies. Cypriots educated in the Greek Universities have traditionally had the monopoly on teaching and administrative positions in Greek secondary schools in Cyprus, in the Inspectorate and in the Ministry of Education. A one time favourite field of study was philology. The training of a philologist in the School of Philosophy at the University of Athens blended the concept of what is worthwhile knowledge with a uniquely Greek version of educational humanism, which combines Greek Orthodoxy, classical Hellenism and humanist studies (Koyzis, 1997).

Another tradition that influenced Cypriot intellectual life is what Koyzis (1995) describes as English ‘essentialism’ referring to what was perceived by Cypriots as English effectiveness in administration and organisation. This tradition was introduced in Cyprus through the influence of British colonial rule¹⁰ which led a number of Cypriots to pursue higher education in England to later join the country’s civil administration. This tradition which is very much present today in Cyprus and could be characterised as a remnant of a colonial legacy in the island, tends to create a non-articulate anglophilia among more urban middle-class Cypriots who prefer things that are ‘English’ and cosmopolitan to things that are ‘Greek’ and perceived as more parochial. An explanation of this is that anglophile Cypriots tend to argue that

¹⁰ The influence of Britain in Cyprus continues today for a number of reasons: a) Britain is a primary destination for Cypriots pursuing post-secondary education b) It is the most important source of tourism c) It was the primary destination for immigration during the early 60s (today in Britain there is the largest expatriate Greek Cypriot community numbering over 200 000 people) and d) It is Cyprus’ major trading partner.

English liberalism, free markets and culture are more natural to Cypriots than the sentimental 'backward' Greek-Christian/Hellenic ideas (Attalides, 1981).

The above traditions tend to characterise the division between two kinds of Cypriot elite: (a) the cultural elite and (b) the economic elite. The economic elite according to Persiannis (1972) tends to be urban and associated with business, professions and anglophilia. The cultural elite is primarily made up of Greek Cypriots who have either been educated in Greece or have adhered to the dominance of Greek culture (language and religion) as the driving force behind the Cypriot State¹¹.

After independence the privileged and influential civil service posts continued to be occupied mostly by people educated in British and, to a lesser degree, in European and American Universities. That led to discontent on the part of those who studied at Greek universities, whose expectations rose when a nationalist government came to power after independence¹². One other group of people educated abroad that was also discriminated against at this time were those who studied in universities of the former East European Socialist block. These people studied in Socialist countries after they were given scholarships from the Cypriot Communist Party (AKEL) and the Communist parties of the Socialist countries. Christodoulou (1995) reports that a study in 1986 showed that the average annual pay of university degree holders amounted to 7656 pounds; graduates from Greek universities, mostly engaged in teaching, earned 89.3 per cent of that average, those with degrees from East European universities, being engaged in sub-professional occupations, earned 73.1 per cent of the average, and those from American and British Universities, mostly engaged in managerial and professional posts, earned 99.5 and 117.3 per cent respectively of the average.

The value of English-speaking education has made competition for scholarships and for university places really keen. Related to that has also been the equally hot race for places at schools preparing students for qualifying examinations for entry to English-speaking universities and above all the English School. Commentators often point out the contradiction between the nationalist political figures' rhetoric and their preference for using their influence to secure such places and scholarships for their children's educational career (Christodoulou, 1995).

¹¹ According to Panteli (1990) "In its most symbolic sense, the cultural elite supported and was supported by the late Archbishop Makarios, who was both the President of the Republic and head of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus.

¹² Many of those who were discontented sympathized and some even actively supported the action that was taken against the government that ultimately led to the coup and the Turkish invasion of 1974.

This points to the fact that the utilitarian value of English education in particular was more significant than publicly expressed political/ideological ideas and beliefs.

What may be concluded from the above is that investing in higher education in Cyprus generally meant high returns. The higher the qualifications one obtained the higher the social position he/she would most likely occupy upon his/her return to Cyprus. High educational credentials that secured social advancement were a route of modernisation, rationality and meritocracy. But what is the situation today in relation to the range of available routes that the Cypriot youth follow in order to acquire post secondary school education?

3.4.3 In search of higher education today

In recent times, higher education was a particularly profitable investment as research by Demetriades (1993) showed. In 1986 individuals with university doctorates earned, on average, 4 times the average earnings of those with no schooling, more than 2.5 times the average of those with secondary education and almost 1.5 times the average earnings of those with a first degree. As was shown, however, there are differences referring to the kind of degree and the university and country from where it originates, something that portrays the different value that the Cypriot society attaches to different educational traditions. In any case, the fact that generally, higher education is strongly associated with high earnings was shown by a study among secondary school graduates by Eliophotou (1995). Eliophotou investigated the factors that influence the demand for higher education in Cyprus and she showed, among other things, that financial returns was one of the most important reasons for pursuing some kind of post secondary education.

This section presents the present picture of where Cypriot students seek higher education. The source of these statistics is mostly the Cypriot Governments' Department of Research and Statistics¹³. One major drawback of the data that the Department of Statistics and Research publishes is that they do not offer the possibility to make in-depth sociological investigations in relation to the social class origins of the students. Measures of the social class background of the students from

¹³ Department of Research and Statistics (1999) *Statistics of Education*, Nicosia.

where interesting observations could be made about the distribution of opportunities among the different classes are notably missing.

According to the official statistics (Department of Statistics and Research, 1999) nearly 62% of the total secondary school leavers continue their studies beyond secondary level. About 29% attend higher institutions abroad and the other 33% attend higher institutions in Cyprus. During the academic year 1998/99 there were 12488 Cypriot students abroad. Greece was the most popular destination with 49,3%, the United Kingdom with 24,6% the USA with 15,1% while the rest went elsewhere. Today, there are roughly equal numbers of male (49.5%) and female (50.5%) students studying abroad. The level of higher education enrolments abroad has decreased by almost 33% since 1980. At the same time there has been an increase of enrolments in tertiary institutions in Cyprus because during this period there was a major expansion of private tertiary education institutions¹⁴ and more importantly the establishment of the University of Cyprus.

In Cyprus there were 33 institutions of higher education in 1998/99, private and public. The students who were enrolled in public institutions (University of Cyprus, Higher Technical Institute, Higher Hotel Institute, School of Nursing, Police Academy etc.) were 46,7% whereas 53,3% attended Private Colleges. There was a slightly higher percentage of female students (56,0%) in Cypriot institutions.

Higher education theoretically appears to be accessible to children coming from working class and rural farming backgrounds. However, some routes for obtaining higher qualifications are clearly restricted, namely, British and American universities, which provide the qualifications mostly in demand by prestigious employers in the labour market. The reason that they are out of reach for a large number of children from lower class positions is the high costs entailed which are unaffordable for these families. Also, another route that is not easily accessible to children from lower class backgrounds is the private colleges in Cyprus. Even though they do not cost as much as attending institutions in Britain and the USA, it is still not an easy or obvious option to consider for the following reason. The degrees and the diplomas that these

¹⁴ These are colleges, which are affiliated to universities abroad (mostly American universities), which accredit the diplomas and degrees that they offer.

institutions award are not officially recognised by the Government of Cyprus¹⁵. However, having said that, these private colleges provided an alternative for at least two kinds of families. One category is those families who aspire to see their children get what is widely considered as prestigious English speaking higher education but do not have the financial resources to send their children directly to English speaking universities. A common practice that was followed in the past was for students to attend these colleges at the beginning of their course and then transfer to a British or American University for their final year and graduate with a degree from there. It is clear that even though the costs are substantially lower than attending abroad for the full duration of the studies, for some families it is a very difficult, if not an impossible, option. The private colleges offer an alternative or a 'safety net' to a second group of parents. Parents, whose children succeed in their entrance examinations for Greek Universities or the TEI¹⁶ institutions but secure a position on a course that they consider as not offering any real prospects for future employment, may send their children in a private college in Cyprus instead. The fact that the route to Greek speaking universities appears to be fairly accessible to all students needs to be examined in the light of the following two parameters:

- a) Some degrees awarded by Greek universities and other Higher Institutions such as the T.E.I., as in Economics, Technology, Accounting etc. are undermined by the fact that in comparison with equivalent degrees from Britain and the USA, are less valued in the labour market, as Demetriades (1993) has demonstrated. These degrees on their own, unless supported by strong familial social networks may have a limited role to play in the competition to pursue privileged posts and other positions and thus makes them, for some, an unrealistic option.
- b) To secure a place in a Greek university and at the University of Cyprus, students must take part in examinations which are organised by the Ministry of Education. These examinations have their own particularities. Some courses of study are in high demand such as the medical courses and primary education

¹⁵ The 23 private sector institutions rely exclusively on British or North American accreditation and degree validation auspices. They offer programmes in business studies, computers and information sciences, hotel management, engineering and technology, secretarial studies and to a very limited extent social sciences (Koyzis, 1997).

¹⁶ Technological Institutions of Higher Education whose degrees are not equal to University degrees.

courses¹⁷. What is widely acknowledged by the students and their families is that to maximise the chances to secure a good result in the examinations students must attend extra tutorial lessons (known as '*frontisteria*') in the subjects that they will take in the examinations. The 'institution' of *frontisteria* in Cyprus (as in Greece) involves many issues in Greek Cypriot educational opportunity structure and it is a controversial topic in the educational matters of the country. The next section describes and examines this institution in an effort to demonstrate the significance of the strategies employed to maximise the prospects of students' academic success.

So, the next section examines in detail the institution of *frontisteria* and its importance for students and their families.

3.4.4 *Frontisteria*

This section presents a picture of the kind of educational institutions that operate as compensatory 'schools' parallel to the public schools in Cyprus, the *frontisteria*. In debates and discussions about educational matters in Cyprus this is often referred to as the 'issue of *parapeadea*'¹⁸ literally meaning a system that exists next to *para* the official one referred to as *peadea*, meaning education. In its more hidden connotation, the term '*parapeadea*' refers to the operation of a system that undermines the essence of the policy of 'free and open education for all'. Many of these 'schools' are informal and there are many controversies concerning their function. *Frontisteria* will be looked on as a very significant part of the context where families decide upon strategies to maximise the opportunities for success in their children's pursuit of higher education.

The name of this kind of school comes from the Greek word *frintizo* meaning to look after, to nurture, to care for. As the name suggests the purpose of these institutions is to attend to students needs in an individualistic manner. It denotes a focus on the personal needs of the students who attend these schools in contrast to the state

¹⁷ The reason why primary teacher education courses are in high demand is because they offer immediate employment once somebody graduates.

¹⁸ This is the phrase that is commonly used when talking about the operation of *frontisteria* in Cyprus and has a negative connotation because it implies the undermining of the policy of free education for all. The educationalist Sergides in his book 'The crisis of education in Cyprus' uses the term *parapeadea* to describe the system which operates parallel to that of the public schools and undermines their function. Sergides, Y. (1992) *I Krisi tis Pedeas stin Kypro*, (The crisis of education in Cyprus), Nicosia.

schools, which due to the large numbers of students in the different classes (around 30-34 students), this may not be possible. There are different versions of *frontisteria* based on their composition and purpose. Some are quite large educational establishments with their own facilities, housed in well-appointed buildings and may employ a number of teachers. Students who attend these establishments are taught typically in groups of 8-12. Another version of *frontisteria* consists of smaller groups (4-5 students) that are taught by a single teacher in a special subject. Many of these groups may be taught in the students' or the teachers' homes. A third version of *frontisteria* consists of private individual tutoring also called '*idietera*', literary meaning private tutoring. Some, usually the larger establishments are formally registered with the Ministry of Education but others, usually the smaller ones, are informal or even operating outside the legal structure¹⁹.

The main purpose for attending *frontisteria* until a couple of decades ago was almost exclusively to learn the English language. Children from a primary school age started attending these schools to learn the English language and to prepare for external examinations such as the GCE or TOEFL. Also, another group of students who attended *frontisteria* were the students who followed the public secondary schools and wanted to follow studies in English speaking Universities. These students attended *frontisteria* to prepare for examinations such as the GSE's (A' Level) or the SAT. With the introduction of entrance examinations for the Greek universities in the early 70's²⁰ there was intense competition among the candidates for a limited number of places in some courses at the Greek Universities (medicine, law, engineering, etc.). This, in conjunction with the general belief that many schools fell short of preparing students fully for these entrance examinations, led to the growth of *frontisteria*, designed specifically to prepare students for entry to higher education. Eventually it has become a very widespread practice among students wishing to enter higher education to follow extra lessons, regardless of their academic performance²¹.

¹⁹ Their illegality is due to the fact that are operated by teachers who are employed in the state system. According to Law teachers who are appointed at public schools are not allowed to engage in any way with private tutoring as this might influence negatively their performance in the public schools.

²⁰ Until that date Greek Cypriot students were been accepted to enroll at a Greek University with their secondary school leaving certificate (*Apolitirio*).

²¹ This information was given to me by the acting Head of the Department of Secondary Education at the Ministry of Education and Culture in Nicosia on August 2001.

The growth of *frontisteria* in Cyprus followed a similar route to that of Greece. This was mainly because of the cultural and educational dependency of Cyprus on Greece, which on many occasions led Cyprus to follow the introduction of reforms and institutions in Greek education²². For that reason and because of the shortage of studies in Cyprus examining the issue of *frontisteria*, it is worth looking at some studies that were done in Greece examining the institution of *frontisteria*. Their findings can offer a good indication of the situation of *frontisteria* in Cyprus today because of the similarities in the educational systems of both countries. Dimou (1996:11) suggests that the institution of *frontisteria* in Greece has become deeply established in the conscience of the Greek people as being a necessary social activity. This is demonstrated by the fact that virtually every Greek student at some point in his/her schooling attends some kind of *frontisteria*. Dimou further indicates that the institution of *frontisteria* in Greece has reached a point of 'equal status' with that of formal education in the minds of ordinary Greek people. According to Dimou, there is a belief among the Greek people that there is a need to complement the education that the formal educational system offers because public schools offer neither complete nor effective education. This belief is strengthened by the following two practices. It is a common practise on behalf of owners of *frontisteria* and teachers who offer such lessons, according to Dimou (1996:16), to embark on a recruiting campaign at the beginning of each school year by advertising the 'success of their students' in the previous year's national entrance examinations for the Greek universities. The owners and those who teach in *frontisteria* tend to claim, and in the eyes of parents and students get all the credit for the success of those students, a claim that remains unchallenged by the public schools that do not claim their share in the students' success. This, according to Dimou, has helped strengthen the belief among parents and students that the *frontisteria* is a necessary requirement for academic success. The other fact that helps to confirm the notion among public opinion that the formal education is incomplete is the expansion of *frontisteria* in areas such as music, art, computers and a wider range of foreign languages which reinforces the view that the public school offers inadequate education. It must be noted, though, that the main reason for students attending *frontisteria*, apart from the

²² Some of these reforms include the introduction of Dimitiki Koini (common modern Greek language), the monotoniko system (the simplification of written Greek), the Eniaio Lykeio (Unified Lyceum) and institutions such as the *frontisteria*.

established mentality that it is a 'must' for success in the universities' entrance examinations, is the belief that schools fall short of offering the best possible preparation for taking formal examinations, particularly for entry to higher education.

The number of students attending *frontisteria*, as was mentioned earlier, has grown over the years both in Greece and in Cyprus. Kassotakis (1991) refers to studies carried out in Greece in the late 80's, which showed that about 70 percent of Lyceum students, especially those in their final year, attended private preparatory schools or took private lessons at home. Dimou (1996) suggests that with the rise in living standards, the lower social classes increasingly took advantage of this institution as they regarded *frontisteria* as an institution that would offer their children more opportunities for success than the state schools themselves. Thus, he reports in his findings that 85 percent of Lyceum students attended *frontisteria*. Nearly half of those students attended classes in *frontisteria* establishments whereas the other half had individual lessons (with tutors) or in small groups (*idietera*).

The amount of money spent in Greece (in 1996) for *frontisteria* is high and growing. This casts doubt on the policy of free and open education for all or at least the policy that public education offers equal opportunities. According to Dimou (1996:115) students were paying up to 100-120 thousand drachmas for private individual lessons, 70 thousand drachmas if they were being taught in small groups and around 50 thousand drachmas in *frontisteria* classes²³. Dimou appropriately comments that 'it seems that free education is a costly affair' (1996:115). The above should be viewed in relation to how effective parents and students regard this institution. When asked, only 18 percent of them stated that they regarded *frontisteria* as the main contributor to success in the general examinations. However, at the same time they indicated that they were prepared to put more money into *frontisteria*! According to Dimou (1996:116), this indicates that in their effort to maximise academic success students and parents often pursue an 'outopia' in the sense that even though they do not really consider *frontisteria* to be particularly effective, it is an area that they are prepared to put more money into.

²³ 100 thousand drachmas equals to around £200. If one considers that a teacher's average monthly income in Greece in 1996 was around £450-£500 (225-250 thousand drachmas) one realizes the enormity of the money spent for *frontisteria*.

The implications of the operation of *frontisteria* in Greece and in Cyprus create many issues generally referred to as ‘the issue of *parapeadea*’. They could be summarised as follows: (a) they create a serious expense to families, especially those with lower incomes, who want to offer the best possible opportunities to their children, (b) their existence goes against the formal educational policy of free public education for all, (c) it creates fatigue for many students who have an already heavily loaded programme, and (d) it has a negative impact on the performance of secondary school teachers for two reasons: (i.) They may not be pressured to cover all the topics of the curriculum adequately since they know that students will cover these topics in their *frontisteria* and (ii.) Many teachers may be tempted to offer private lessons themselves, contrary to the official policy of the Ministry of Education, which strictly forbids them to do so.

In response to wider criticisms made by parents, educationalists and commentators against the operation of *frontisteria* in Cyprus and of the fact that they were seen as undermining the government’s official policy of free education for all, the government decided in 1997 to organise a public system of *frontisteria* called ‘*Kratika Instituta*’ (Public Institutes). With the introduction of these institutes the Ministry of Education basically sought to ameliorate some of the negative aspects mentioned in the previous paragraph. One was to satisfy the demand for extra tutorial lessons for a number of students at a lower cost compared to the private sector. At the same time it was a way of reassuring parents that it was responding to criticisms about Lyceum inefficiencies in preparing students for their exams by introducing a compensatory measure. Also, it offered teachers who were appointed in public schools the opportunity to teach in these institutes, thus removing the dilemma that some were facing when they were pressured by parents to offer *frontisteria* ‘illegally’. Some may add to the above another objective that the Ministry achieved with the establishment of public *frontisteria*. It provided work for a number of unemployed university graduates who awaited appointment as secondary school teachers in public schools with part-time employment.

The situation regarding how many students attend *frontistiria* in Cyprus was the subject of a small survey by a group of secondary school assistant head teachers

attending an inset-training course at the Pedagogical Institute in Nicosia during the school year 1998-99²⁴. Their research investigated the number of public Lyceum students in the their final year who attended *frontisteria*. It showed that 93,2 per cent of the students included in their survey, attended *frontisteria*. Of those who did not attend, the majority indicated that the main reason for not attending *frontisteria* was because they did not intend to pursue higher education. The main reasons that the students indicated for attending *frontisteria* were a) to prepare for the entrance examinations for the Greek universities and the University of Cyprus (67,0 %) and b) to improve their performance in school (65,6 %). A third significant reason that the students gave was to prepare for examinations leading to studies in English speaking universities such as GSE, SAT, TOEFL etc. (36,1%). Two important findings of the research were: a) the number of graduating students attending *frontisteria* for the purpose of learning English was less compared with students in lower grades in secondary school, probably because English is a subject that they have given emphasis to in previous years. Many students complete their studies of the English language and sit on external examinations (GCE or TOEFL) before their final year in the Lyceum. In their final year many students may want to have more time to concentrate on other subjects that have to do with their further studies. b) Another finding of that research was that there was a small percentage of students attending lessons in *frontisteria* that had to do with arts and humanities subjects. 5,1% attended music lessons, 5,1% attended Dance lessons and only 1,2% attended Art lessons.

²⁴ Vasileiou, V., Eliopoulou, S et al (1999) *Erevna gia ta frontistiria ton mathiton tis tritis Likeiou* (Survey regarding the frontisteria that 3rd year Lyceum students attend), Nicosia: Pedagogical Institute. (In Greek)

3.5 Summary

This chapter has dealt with the Cypriot society's transition during the twentieth century from a traditional to a modern society. It was essential to present these issues, as they will help the reader understand the social environment within which young people's aspirations for their future are shaped. The development of the educational system in Cyprus, as well as the value that education has occupied within the Cypriot society has been examined. The different prospects of higher education and the symbolic and pragmatic meanings that Cypriots attach to them have also been presented as these will help the reader make sense of the meaning that the different choices that students and their families have for subsequent social destinations.

In the next chapter detailed examination is made of the contexts within which parents develop different strategies relating to their social and cultural capitals in order to ensure that the best possible decisions are made for their children's post secondary school destinations and occupational outcomes. Furthermore, the significance of social class, as well as gender, for the development of modern/liberal attitudes contrasted with traditional/conservative attitudes referring to the role of women in society, are explored.

Chapter 4:

Developing the theoretical framework for investigating choice making in education in the context of Cyprus

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the development of the Cypriot society and its journey towards modernisation. In these transformations and the eventual establishment of contemporary Cypriot society, the development of the present structure of the educational system was also presented. I have attempted to demonstrate the importance of education to Greek Cypriot life and culture throughout most of the 20th century and how it has developed along with and in response to the changes in society in general. The rapid transformation of the Cypriot society has created an environment where one may find an amalgam of traditional and modern attitudes in the practices of modern Cypriots. These ideologies have consequences for the way modern Cypriots view social relations in general, and in particular, issues relating to social structuring of social class and gender relations, opportunities and outcomes. Both social class and gender constitute vital facets that affect the life chances of young individuals.

The way choices are made in education are examined as part of the strategies that families employ in order to secure the best possible outcomes for their offspring. It is argued that, families employ resources they have available that are considered to be particularly effective in producing results in the field of education. These resources include, among other things, economic, social and cultural capital available to family members. The focus of this study is on non-monetary forms of capital (social and cultural). Social capital refers to resources that emerge from social networks and connections and is available for mobilisation in order to provide positive social outcomes. Cultural capital refers to resources that influence students' educational prospects in a number of ways. As part of students' cultural knowledge and habits it can affect their academic performance and the level of their aspirations. At the level of parental knowledge it can influence the way parents take actions that have effects in selecting, for instance, *frontisteria* etc. At the end of this chapter the research

themes that shape the specific research questions that were investigated by empirical research are presented.

4.2 The role of the family and its resources in a changing society

The influence of family background on children's educational experiences and on educational outcomes has always had a dominant place within the field of sociology of education (Bourdieu, Coleman, Wong etc). It has been well documented that family background influences an individual's educational life chances. Family resources, also called '*family capital*', can take different forms and can play an important role at different levels in the educational life of a child. The mechanisms by which this is done still attract the interest of many researchers in the field of sociology of education.

As was argued in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.1) the family provides its members with those real and symbolic capitals that influence an individual's chances in the social arena. Of particular interest to this study are those non-monetary capitals that are required for success in schooling and influence the choices that students make upon their graduation from secondary education. Are these non-monetary capitals unequally distributed between the different social classes in the same way economic capital is? Can they explain differential educational outcomes? Through the investigation of the family resources and the way they are being employed intentionally or unintentionally to create advantages (or disadvantages) it is hoped to provide insights into the general social processes of social reproduction and should help us to address wider issues of social justice in the Cypriot society.

So, in this section the role of the Greek Cypriot family and of the capitals it may potentially make available to its younger members are examined as well as that of the general structural conditions that potentially influence the choices that the students who graduate secondary education make for their post secondary school destinations. In Chapter 3, the different choices that are available to secondary school leavers in a social context where particular ideologies that influence decision-making are shaped

were presented. In this chapter the way families utilise their capitals, particularly those with a non-monetary nature, in this social environment in an effort to create the best possible opportunities for their children, are considered. In this context the development of the social environment that allows for non-monetary capitals to gain potentially considerable value are outlined.

As in most societies, which are class divided, in Cypriot society the family possesses and has access to different capitals, which are related to the position that that family occupies within the class structure. These resources are directly linked with the particular characteristics of the given social structure. These capitals are available for use in a number of ways. One of the characteristic applications is in their 'investment' in the field of education for the benefit of the family's offspring. This raises issues to be addressed empirically concerning the role of family capital in explaining differential outcomes in educational processes such as that of differential academic achievement and diverse patterns of choice making for post-school destinations. High academic achievement is generally a serious advantage that facilitates the choice making process for progression to higher education.

As was argued in Chapter 2, according to Bourdieu, families try to advance their social positions in relation to the present social positions the adults occupy, or at least to reproduce them and safeguard them against downward mobility. The institution of the family and its reproductive role should be seen in respect to the broader socio-economic and cultural practices of its social surroundings. The family is not an independent institution isolated from the broader socio-economic processes of the society within which it functions. The social, cultural and educational conditions are crucial in informing us about the problematics surrounding the reproductive role of the family, both at its own level, and socially in a broader context. It is in these contexts that the research seeks to investigate problematic issues in relation to the operation of cultural and social capital as forces that influence the processes and structures, indeed, the 'structuration' of social reproduction. Within the same ideological context issues in relation to gender affect the life chances of individuals in a distinct way.

In a social system that was under continuous change during the twentieth century the

opportunities that appeared for intergenerational mobility were numerous. The economic development presented in Appendix A, brought with it a restructuring of the class structure. The changing economic and occupational structure created many middle and upper middle social class positions. The contest for filling these new posts was not always equally open to all contestants. In this context the social origins, and especially one's family, was a potentially decisive asset for somebody wanting to move socially upwards. Within the political, social and economic system of Cyprus the family was the motivating force and contained valuable assets for individual aspirations. The good name of the family, the need for the family's honour to be upheld has been a powerful force for the younger members of many families to do well in life and to occupy at least a similar, for the very well placed, or a better status in society for those in 'modest' social positions (Christodoulou, 1995).

The ways with which families try to secure at least as good or better life chances, social advancement and ultimately better social status for its members can take various forms. One of the ways that the family can secure the prospects of its younger members is through the family business. Family businesses constituted of some two thirds of the total number of businesses in Cyprus today (Christodoulou, 1995). Young members of the family are usually expected to join the family business. Family wealth also tends to be passed on from generation to generation sometimes in the form of dowry to the children (mostly girls) when they are married. Even though today the tradition of helping the daughter when she gets married is not as prevalent as it used to be two or three decades ago, it is still present¹. Agryrou (1995) points to 'traditional' and 'modernist' attitudes to this tradition with lower and rural classes more keen to retain the old tradition of providing a house for the daughter whereas the 'new' middle classes tend to adopt modern practices for their daughters by investing in their education, for example.

In any case, when it is present, family wealth is invested in order to 'buy' expensive and prestigious education and thus contribute to the effort of pursuing a professional occupation with high social status. In Chapter 3 it was pointed out that education has been central in the Greek Cypriot life and culture for a long time. Thus, the role of

¹ Nowadays, however, it is not a prerequisite for marriage as it was some time ago. For more details on marriage and the changing customs that relate to it see Agryrou (1997).

education, and particularly that of acquiring educational credentials necessary for social advancement, is an area that concentrates the strategies of many Cypriot families. Any source that might help enhance the prospects of their children in achieving the best possible educational results would be expected to be pursued. In this pursuit the role of mobilising their cultural capital is paramount but also they must be seen as actively endeavouring to increase it even further. Investing in building children's cultural capital may take the form of actively enrolling children in activities such as music, theatre or dance; encouraging them to visit museums, galleries etc and providing them with those resources (e.g. computers, Internet access, books, encyclopaedias etc) that may enhance the prospects of their children to do well at school. But, firstly let us examine the role of social capital as a source for generating advantages or disadvantages for young Cypriots.

4.2.1 Social capital

Among the resources that many Cypriot families, regardless of their social position, have been employing for a long time² to help their younger members consists of the mobilisation of social networks that they have available. These social networks could be with different centres of power within the society; political, administrative, economical, educational, the Church etc. Families, which are well placed in relation to the different social networks through their connections to the political establishment, the political elites and other centres of power such as the powerful state bureaucracy or the Church, are able to provide their members with several advantages compared with those not so well placed. These advantages count for favourable treatment in acquiring anything from prestigious posts and positions to educational and training opportunities. The family social capital, when it is present, is an asset that is very powerful and effective in the context of the Cypriot society and its successful application for many decades in the social life has cultivated a distinctive 'ethos' which refers to its use to gain social advantages in the antagonisms for securing the best possible outcomes for the family members.

Even though this asset is something that any family would want to utilise for the benefit of their offspring and especially to secure better social positions and a better future for them, it is reasonable to assume that not all families would be equally

² Mostly after Independence.

effective in taking advantages from it. This is because class-specific forms of sociability and networks render social capital unequal. The effectiveness of social capital is different for different social classes. According to Portes (1998) lower-class networks may be as plentiful and varied as middle-class ones, but less productive of socially and economically successful outcomes.

In its present form, social capital in Cyprus dates back to the first years of Independence. However, the application of social networks to achieve social goods and advantages has a much longer history, which is demonstrated in Appendix D. This kind of social capital is based on the existence of a large network of relationships based on kinship, political affiliation, trade union membership and in general in 'mutual acquaintance or recognition', in Bourdieu's (1986) words. The networks that the family forms, offers strength and protection to its members. For the Cypriot family, it is crucial to try to maintain and enhance this particularly effective social asset as its value is often very important when trying to get access to 'goods' that money and other material assets do not provide. The extent and the quality of these networks is a measure of a family's social status and power. Social capital is also often a distinctive mark of the symbolic power of the family because of the way that it places the family within the power structure of the society. The extent and the quality of the linkages that the Cypriot family has available within the society are very evident, for instance, in the social event of marriage. This event offers a clear example of real and symbolic capital being demonstrated. As Argyrou (1997:6,7) notes in his study of marriages in modern Cyprus '...an average-sized wedding numbers 1,500-2,000 people [as guests], while weddings with twice as many guests are not unknown'. The number, the composition and the 'quality' of the guests in weddings offer an indication, and, some may argue, a good measure of the quality of the networks a family can potentially access (of their symbolic capital in other words).

Social capital within the Cypriot social structure

The function of social capital depends largely on the structures of the society within which it functions. According to Coleman (1988) social structure and the particular social conditions within that structure are important in facilitating the application of social capital. The contemporary social structure within which social capital is

located in Cyprus plays an important role in the educational processes. Particularly, the social structure constitutes part of the context that influences social action of individuals in relation to the decisions that they make for their future educational and occupational pursuits. In Appendix D, the development and the formation of those structures that allow for social capital to be a powerful differentiating medium in modern Cyprus is explored. Specifically, the social and historical sources that have helped shape the conditions that allow for its modern application is explored. Moreover it is argued that the application of social capital as a potential resource to produce differential social profits for its possessors in modern Cyprus is the product of the following sources:

- a) The formation of a distinct ‘ethos’ about the way social goals could be achieved as a result of the presence of a long tradition of patronage and clientelistic relationships.
- b) The existence of a rich network of relationships based on political connections. These may have a dependency character but could also be relationships that carry the element of mutual exchanges of favours and the creation of obligations. These became more evident and clearer during the anti-colonial struggle between the nationalists and the Greek-Orthodox Church on the one side and the left-wingers on the other and continued through the practices of the different political parties, associations, clubs, trade unions etc.
- c) To the above one must add the role of the state in the present economic and social life, which occupies a central place in Cyprus and extends to most aspects of social and economic life. This as is explained later, offers the contexts for new clientelistic relationships and selectively favourable treatments (exchanges etc).

The first two sources point to the need to provide some historical evidence in order to describe the origins of specific forms of social capital and to view its modern aspect and application within a historical perspective. Regarding the formation of an ‘ethos’, which refers to the way people perceive as an appropriately effective way to pursue social goals through social networks, one may argue that it is not a uniquely Cypriot

phenomenon. If one looks at other Mediterranean societies the existence of a networks of clientelistic relationships and patronage through history and their mobilisation to promote different social goals has been a common characteristic (Gellner et al, 1977). This has given rise to a mentality that this is an effective and legitimate way to achieve socially. Social capital can produce resources, which may give rise to 'profits' because the social conditions allow for it to flourish. In this way a '*that's the way we do things*' mentality has been cultivated. And that situation seems to benefit not only those who seek favourable treatment and have access to those sources that can provide it but most importantly, it serves those who provide these services because it is an effective means of preserving, strengthening and legitimising their influential positions.

The mobilisation of social networks works mainly at two levels that are not always very overtly discernible:

- a) As patronage and clientelistic relationships between people of different social status (vertical networks).
- b) As relationships based on 'mutual recognition and understanding' between people of more or less equal social standing (horizontal networks), i.e offering assistance or even 'favours' which in turn create obligations for future reference. These obligations may be the products of conscious and premeditated strategies but equally they may be the outcome of unintended consequences when one has people '*ipohreomenous*' (obliged)³.

It is difficult to distinguish between when the mobilisation of social capital is a product of political clientelism and patronage and when the outcome of relationships is based on 'mutual recognition and understanding'. Before moving on, it would be useful to explore further the points made above by referring to the work of Putnam (1994), as in his work, there are useful ideas about the nature of social networks. As is shown below the existence of the practice of using social networks and acquaintances; *mesa* in Greek, to achieve social goals has historically developed to its present structure whereby today many Cypriots regard it as a product of a deep-rooted belief, an 'ethos' that it is a socially accepted way of doing things effectively.

³ When a favour or some kind of assistance is offered, even a small one is done, the usual reply of the recipient of that assistance is 'Ime ipohreomenos' or 'Ipohreoses me' meaning 'I acknowledge that I have an outstanding obligation towards you'.

Putnam (1994:173) argues that any society is characterised by networks of interpersonal communication and exchange. He distinguishes these networks between 'horizontal' and 'vertical'. Horizontal networks bring together people of equal status and power whereas vertical networks link people in unequal, asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependence. Putnam acknowledges the fact that in the real world most networks have elements of both. He also acknowledges that often, horizontal networks are a superior form of network because they are more reliable and can sustain social trust and co-operation between the participants. What is argued here, in the presentation of social capital in the Cypriot society in relation to Putnam's remarks, is that just as in every society, in Cyprus, both forms of networks have been present and, at times, one form has been more prominent than the other.

As shown in Appendix D, in earlier periods (beginning of the century) vertical social networks based on patronage and clientelism were more prominent for those who could access them in the Cypriot society due to the fact that there was economic and political dependency, which was sustaining these networks. These networks were a way that 'secured' access to the power structure between the dominant and the dominated sections of the Greek Cypriot society. As the society embarked on its journey to modernisation along with the restructuring of the social structure and the expansion of the middle classes, a shift towards strengthening horizontal networks took place. Horizontal networks strengthened because of the fact that the networks that were based on economic dependency broke down. At the same time mass upward social mobility occurred, as the occupational structure was transformed creating a large urban and rural middle classes.

The practice of actively being engaged in a process whereby social networks are considered to be primary mechanisms for pursuing social goals should be considered as an embodiment in practice of the traditional 'ethos' that 'this is the way we [Cypriots] are doing things'. In contrast to this attitude, however, the modernist tradition sees such practices as non-rational and undermining appropriate forms of meritocratic selection and, more widely, of social justice in society. As mentioned in Chapter 3 the modernist approach, contrary to traditional practices that approve resorting to social networks to promote social objectives, considers that social

objectives should be pursued following rational, legitimate and transparent processes where everybody would be given equal opportunities for success. In that spirit, objective and ‘meritocratic’ procedures should be replacing practices based on nepotism and differential access to social networks. Modern practices should ensure that, in principle, all people should potentially be in a position to compete for similar social goods on equal grounds.

These two perspectives are expected to have effects on the ways families and young individuals go about making their choices for post secondary school destinations. Social capital is expected to have differential effects for families from different social class positions that possess this resource in various degrees. For example, some middle class families who adhere to traditional practices of actively pursuing social networks to promote the interests of their children would be expected to develop a distinctive attitude to post secondary education destinations. By the same token, however, how would other middle class families who adopt the modern perspective of the use of social networks, respond to the choice making for their children?

This section has presented social capital as a resource that can potentially influence the process of choice making for post school destinations. The use of social networks should be examined in relation to the existence of a social environment where traditional perspectives that favour its application conflict with modern attitudes that regard such practices as anachronistic and backward. The next section looks at the way the Cypriot family relates to another form of non-monetary capital; cultural capital.

4.2.2 Cultural capital

Cultural capital is another form of non-monetary capital that can potentially offer advantages to families and young Greek Cypriot students in their choice-making process.

Parents’ and students’ desire to do well at school is a common feature in most Cypriot families. There is a widespread perception that in the past three or four decades, during the transformation of the Cypriot society, those young graduates with university degrees managed to ‘obtain’ secured middle class positions. This has

helped strengthen a belief of a strong association between academic achievement and social success. What are the elements that contribute to the educational success of young Greek Cypriots? According to the cultural capital theory individuals from various socio-economic family backgrounds achieve differentially at school partly because they have diverse endowments of cultural capital and cultural know-how. But is this the case in modern Cyprus? So far, there has never been a comprehensive research study in Cyprus to examine whether children from different socio-economic backgrounds have differences in the way they relate to activities and practices that may constitute indicators of cultural capital. Are there distinctive differences in that respect? In other words are children from different social class backgrounds involved in cultural activities (such as music, theatre, museum visits literature reading etc.) in distinctive patterns? Do they differ in their possession of cultural/educational objects such as computers, Internet access, encyclopaedias, books etc. that could offer potential benefits in their intellectual development and educational experience? Do they read literature in distinctive ways? More importantly though, do potential differences in the above translate to differences in educational processes?

In addition to the above, how does Cypriot parents' own spontaneously acquired cultural capital in the form of knowledge of the way the Cypriot educational system functions with its strengths and weaknesses and of various other schooling processes influence the educational prospects of their children? Such knowledge would enable them, for example, among other things, to actively engage in the selection of the appropriate type of school and specialisation and in the selection of effective *frontisteria* that would offer better preparation for university entrance examinations. It should be expected that parents' cultural capital would be linked with their own educational and occupational experiences and trajectories. The higher the academic qualifications of the parents the more cultural capital would be present in the home environment. As was noted in Chapter 2 this had been the disputed assumption of Halsey, *et al.* (1980).

At this point an issue that connects cultural and social capital must be noted. It refers specifically to the connection of parental cultural capital and social capital. It would be reasonable to assume that the effectiveness of social capital in the practices of educational choice would depend to an extent on parents' knowledge of the system of

how best to access and mobilise effective social networks to promote the particular interests of their children. Not all parents would have the potential to have inside knowledge of how things are done effectively, which are the best and most suitable sources of providing advantages in the pursuit of certain goals. This raises interesting issues about the interrelation between various forms of capital in order to facilitate (or restrict) educational processes.

Cultural capital as a resource that influences and shapes to an extent, children's abilities to cope better with educational processes, and also as parental ability to be successfully involved in the education of children with positive outcomes, should be examined within the context of the Cypriot society to establish whether it is a recourse that, along with social capital, produces benefits for academic and eventual social success. Both forms of capital are not directly linked to economic capital, which is often regarded as the sole means of social differentiation, and can provide an insight into the complex and multifaceted mechanisms that produce differential educational and thus social outcomes.

4.3 Gender influencing the life chances of young Greek Cypriots

Traditional and modernist ideologies developed during the transition of the Cypriot society to modernity refer to ways with which issues of social relations are approached. The way issues relating to gender and particularly to the role and the position of men and women in the Cypriot society are bound to be differently approached by different sections of the Cypriot society within the context of these ideologies. Today the position of women in society appears to be moving towards achieving equal status in relation to that of men.

So far we have argued that choice making in education is bound to be influenced by the different resources (material, non economic and symbolic) that are made available to the younger members by their families. These differences emanate from the differential location of families and individuals within the class structure. Equally, gender is expected to have a substantial influence on young persons' life chances. Social class, and gender intertwine to make a complex pattern of influences

on an individual's life chances. Together they make possible the production of different strategies that affect choices in education. Families from different social class backgrounds are expected to develop their strategies for choice making within the framework of modern versus traditional perspectives differently for male and female students, depending on the way they view gender issues. It would be interesting to examine the way social class and gender influence different *habitués* and distinct expectations about their future.

It is often reported that even though, nowadays, girls seem to be doing equally well if not better in school in terms of academic achievement this is not reflected in the general position that women occupy in modern societies (Meighan and Siraj-Blatchford, 1997:316-21). There have been many explanations as to why girls tend to follow different trajectories in education (ibid). Explanations that focus on psychological elements such as that of abilities or personality traits are not expanded upon here, nor are schooling processes and the differences in the schooling experience of boys and girls, which many would argue are among the sources that generate unequal outcomes in education, looked at in detail. Rather, the discussion focuses on explanations that derive from the explanatory concept at the level of culture and the definitions that are attached to gender, which may have implications for the way different familial resources are mobilised for the benefit of girls.

At the end of their secondary education young people are faced with different options as to what they will do regarding further education or training and whether to enter the labour market. But before they reach that point young people and their families have already made choices that have led them to differential 'exit points' from secondary education. These different 'exit points' play a major role in the decisions that young people make. If, for instance, they followed a specialisation that was academically oriented, then it would be expected that those students would enter further education. If, on the other hand, they attended a specialisation that was vocationally oriented (secretarial studies, technical training etc.) it is more likely that these youngsters would enter the labour market after their secondary schooling. There are noticeable patterns in relation to gender in the choices that young people make in relation to the kind of secondary education that they attend. This can be seen in the case of Britain as well as in the case of Cyprus.

Foskett & Hemsley-Brown (2001:102) summarise the gender pattern of choice post - 16 in England and Wales. They report that participation rates post-16 were higher amongst young women than young men (75%: 67% in 1995/96), with females more likely to choose academic pathways. Amongst those choosing vocational training some 65% are young men. In Cyprus one can observe a similar trend with females being more inclined to pursue higher education (63,3%: 48,2%) (ITAC: 1997:62).

Foskett & Hemsley-Brown (2001:134) also report that the career aspirations of young people in London show interesting gender and ethnicity patterns. For example, Asian male students are more interested in careers in finance, IT and engineering and both male and female students are interested in law and medicine. Among Black students, females were more interested in medicine, law and business and males are interested in sport, engineering, finance and IT. Among white students girls are more interested in teaching, law or fashion and beauty whereas boys are interested in sport, finance and IT. According to the Official statistics in Cyprus (Department of Statistics, 1999), as far as gender is concerned there are some noticeable patterns in higher education population. Female students focus more on Education, Fine Arts, Humanities and Law whereas male students focus on Economics and Business studies, IT, Medicine and Engineering and Technologies.

These patterns in higher education would most likely have consequences in the positions men and women would occupy later in the labour market. Foskett & Hemsley-Brown (2001:174) cite some recent trends in the labour market in Britain for young people as described by Roberts (1995). Roberts argues that even though there have been changes in the labour markets with female school leavers attaching the same importance to occupational careers as males, traditional gender patterns persist in employment, with males dominating management and high-status professions, and women dominating lower-status and lower-paid sectors. Considering the gender composition of Greek Cypriot youth in higher education it would be safe to assume that this would be reflected in the positions men and women would occupy in the Cypriot labour market.

What kinds of explanations may be given for the above? Could explanations be found in the way choices are made for higher education? The empirical investigation in the way choices are made will hopefully offer answers to these issues. Generally speaking, however, different societies have traditionally been allocating men and women to different positions depending on their expectations of their respective roles. It is widely accepted that the agencies of socialisation, particularly the family, have been socialising boys and girls to fit those expectations. Over time, however, these expectations have been changing as a result of general structural changes in societies such as modernisation processes. Consequently, these changes are reflected in the labour market. Women, for example, over recent years have been occupying different positions in the changing social structure. The institution of family itself has been changing as well.

The differences in the socialisation process of boys and girls signify different expectations for achievement for male and female students. For instance, it could be the case that if the society lays emphasis on men being the primary wage earner for the family, more emphasis is expected to be given to boys to secure such job prospects to support their family than to girls who are expected to play a financially supportive role. Thus this could possibly make their family invest more in the educational and occupational future of boys rather than that of girls, for whom the expectations may be less. A traditional attitude that attaches expectations of being wives and mothers, rather than having professions, to girls, may have according consequences in the choices made for their future. Argyrou (1995) seems to be arguing that, generally, working classes in Cyprus tend to associate more with traditional ideas and middle classes with modern ideas. Bearing this in mind, do class differences in the perspectives different families adopt in relation to gender affect choice making? This remains to be seen in the empirical investigation. At this point it could be argued that the way that different families make use of their resources for the benefit of their children may vary depending on the gender of the child.

4.4 Summary of the main issues and research themes

This chapter has examined theoretical issues relating to factors that can potentially influence educational and social processes in contemporary Cyprus. It was argued

that within Cypriot society various perspectives perceive social processes differently and this has effects on the way young people's life chances are shaped. For example, we have claimed that traditional and modern ideologies perceive social relations and gender issues differently and the way in which families relate to or endorse one ideology or another, is bound to have consequences for the way choices are made in education. The Cypriot family, through the various resources that it makes available to its younger members, has a crucial role to play in the way children progress educationally and socially. These resources may prove crucial for facilitating choice making in education. The relative effectiveness of resources such as cultural and social capital should be viewed in relation to general structural characteristics found in the Cypriot society (i.e. the way social networks are created, maintained and used).

Cultural capital is a resource that can produce possible advantages in the Cypriot family in its attempt to maximise the children's life chances in two ways: Firstly, as a resource that provides opportunities for children by enhancing their educational achievement and raising their academic aspirations which consequently has effects on the choice making process. Secondly, as a parental resource, it constitutes in an unintended manner an asset which parents 'use' to facilitate them in being actively involved in the educational process of their children as it puts them in a better position to negotiate their relationship for access to and use of social networks to accrue benefits for their children. It has been argued that the use of social networks is a powerful differentiating asset within the realities of contemporary Cypriot society because of certain characteristics found in the Cypriot social structure that are the product of its socio-historic development.

One such characteristic of the Cypriot society is the longstanding existence and development of an ideology that legitimises seeking and using of social networks to achieve social goals. The use of social networks, '*mesa*', for achieving social goals in Cyprus is a product of a long history. It started in the form of patronage and clientelistic relationships in a traditional society and it went through many phases to end up in its present form in a 'modern' society. The opportunities to access and mobilise such networks for the benefit of children is a major resource because they can make educational credentials -which on their own may not be successful- very effective in providing better life chances.

The use of social networks to promote social objectives sits at the point of tension between two opposing perspectives. On the one hand there is the position that corresponds to a distinctive ethos that has been cultivated in Cypriot society that the use of such networks is 'a way of doing things effectively'. For many people it is not necessarily an illegal or immoral process and as such represents the continuing realities of traditional viewpoints of social relations. On the other hand, there are those who perceive this procedure as a corrupt, non-meritocratic, unfair and anachronistic way that the members of society are treated and new modern ways should be adopted. These represent the modernist approach to how social relations are perceived. Those who argue against traditional practices believe that practices involving the use of social networks to get access to social goods hold the society back to a pre-modern past and thus are an obstacle to modernity. The traditionalist point of view argues that this is an institution that has always been there, everybody can potentially benefit from it and that people ought to accept it, live with it, because things will never change. These are different sides of contemporary Greek Cypriot identity. The presence of either of these perspectives in the home environment where decisions are made in relation to future prospects can potentially influence the choice making process. The kind of choices that young boys and girls make for their future will be potentially influenced according to which perspective prevails in the family environment, whether this is a conservative/ traditional or a liberal/ modern attitude.

Next, the research themes that the present study set to address within the particular field of education in the given social setting of the modern Greek Cypriot society is presented.

4.4.1 Research themes

The general social and cultural conditions laid out in the previous chapter frame the specific questions that this research addresses in the empirical part of this study. Earlier, it was hypothesized that families are differentially bestowed with specific resources (material and non material) as a result of their location within the class system and that they would try to utilise them for the benefit of their younger members. These resources are expected to be used, among other areas, in the interest of enhancing the academic performance of the children and in their effort to obtain

educational qualifications that will later secure what is regarded as a worthwhile and possibly a high-status job. Non-material resources in particular facilitate strategic practices on behalf of the family aiming at enhancing the future prospects of their children. An issue that arises from the above is whether families differentiate their strategies for male and female children.

This study recognises the realities of the class structure formed in a post-colonial society arriving relatively late to 'modernity'. Within these realities the Cypriot society carries the traces of 'traditional' and 'backward' practices contrasted with 'modern' practices, beliefs for fair, just and rational social relations and the role of men and women in society. Within these realities the intention was to investigate the different strategies that various families employ in the effort to maximise the future prospects of their children. Below, the research themes that frame the conceptual outline which provided the basis for developing the research questions presented in the next chapter are presented:

- What are the characteristics of the Greek Cypriot family in terms of the resources they have available for use for the benefit of their children?
- What are possible factors that influence the academic performance and level of educational aspirations of secondary school students?
- Does the existence of differences in the possession of familial non-monetary resources have consequences in the choice making in relation to post school destinations?
- How are the different ideologies in relation to social relations and gender roles played out in the way families perceive their social network potentials and thus, ultimately, how do they influence and explain the choice making process of secondary school students?

To go about seeking answers to the above it was important to gather and analyse suitable empirical data. But first in the next chapter more specific research questions are laid out. Following that, there is a description of the research design, the timetable, the methods and the procedure followed to achieve answers to these questions.

Chapter 5:

Methods and data collection

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the particular research questions and the research strategy that was followed in order to gather empirical data to address them are presented. The reasons for adopting the particular methods that were adopted are discussed and it is argued that a ‘mixed method’ approach was more suitable for the purposes of the present study than the use of a single approach (qualitative or quantitative) for collection and analysis of data. Then, the development of the research tools is presented after which the procedure that was followed in order to gather the data needed is outlined. Finally, some methodological considerations when dealing with the concepts of social class, cultural and social capital in the analysis of the gathered data are presented.

5.1.1 The focus of the empirical study

The purpose of the empirical study was to gather such data that would provide answers to the particular research questions that are presented in the next section. From the research themes presented in the previous chapter it becomes apparent that the focus of the empirical study was the students from the full range of secondary schools in Cyprus and their families since this study regards the family as central, indeed the very environment within which the decision making process takes place.

5.1.2 Research questions/hypotheses

At the end of Chapter 4, the themes that the empirical investigation should cover in order to explore the role of non-monetary forms of capital in educational choice making processes in the Cypriot social context were presented. Below, the specific research questions/hypotheses are presented and are clustered in three groups.

1. Choices for post secondary school destinations

- *There are expected to be different patterns in the intentions to pursue higher education. These differences will refer to:*

I. social class

II. *gender*

III. *field of study*

IV. *country of study*

- *There are expected to be distinctive social class and gender patterns in the occupational aspiration of young secondary school graduates.*

2. The Cypriot family and its non-monetary capitals

- *Middle class families are expected to have more non-monetary forms of capital available to utilise compared with lower class families. In particular they are expected to possess more cultural capital manifested in the following two ways:*
 - a) *Middle class students are expected to attend more cultural activities, read more literature and possess more cultural/educational items than their peers from lower social classes. The above could potentially offer them educational advantages.*
 - b) *Middle class parental cultural capital is expected to be more effective than that of lower class parents.*
- *The social networks and connections of middle class families capable of offering advantages in post school choices to their children are expected to be of better 'quality' compared with lower class families.*
- *Parents' own schooling experiences are expected to inform their attitudes regarding the way social advancement is achieved.*
- *Middle class parents are expected to adhere more to 'modern' attitudes regarding processes of social advancement (meritocratic processes). Working classes are expected to adopt more conservative attitudes (utilisation of 'mesa').*
- *Middle class parents are expected to be more liberal in their attitudes to gender issues. These attitudes are expected to have positive consequences in the way various resources are made available to boys and girls. This, consequently, would provide middle class female students with more opportunities.*

3. Non-monetary capitals and educational processes

- *What are the effects of cultural and social capital in various educational processes? Specifically,*

- a) *How is academic performance influenced by the available cultural capital?*
 - b) *How are educational aspirations influenced by the available cultural and familial social capital?*
- *Parental social and cultural capitals are expected to influence the selection of frontisteria for their children.*
 - a) *Frontisteria are expected to play an important role in the schooling process of most young individuals particularly those intending to pursue higher education.*
 - b) *Middle class parents are expected to be in a position to select 'better quality' frontisteria for their children.*
- *The availability of familial social capital is expected to play a significant role in choice making for higher education. Specifically familial social capital is thought to inform an integral component of a process of formulation of a distinctive habitus towards choice.*

5.2 Research design

In most research projects, after the research questions are defined, attention is turned to the development of those research tools that will provide the researcher with such quality data and form of analysis that would offer answers to these questions. When faced with the decision of what is the best way to go about and gather empirical data to address research questions, it is highly likely that the debate between the positivists/empiricist and the constructivist/phenomenological paradigms in social science research which favour quantitative or qualitative methods respectively would come up. The selection of methods and the data collection tools is a decision that should be heavily influenced by the nature of the research questions.

In researching young people's educational choices various researchers have used both methodologies, according to Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (2001:43). Some have used a quantitative approach based on the positivist view of research and others a qualitative approach based on the ethnographic research tradition. Examples of the first approach include Connor et al (1999) and Connor et al (2001) in the UK educational context and Eliophotou-Menon (1995) in the Cypriot educational

context. In-depth, qualitative research methodologies, investigating the ‘reality of choices’ which provide insights into the process of choice itself include the studies by Gewritz et al (1995), Reay (1996, 1998), Hodgkinson et al (1998), Reay and Ball (1998) and Ball et al (2000).

According to Brannen (1992: 4) the most important difference between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms is the way in which each tradition treats data. For example the first method (quantitative), which usually involves the use of questionnaires and structured interviews, by and large uses the data that come out of research to isolate and define variables and variable categories, which are linked together to test a hypothesis. Such an approach may search to identify factors that influence a broad group of parents and young people in their educational choices. On a similar research project a qualitative approach may search in the data that are collected for patterns of inter-relationships between previously unspecified sets of concepts, which as the research progresses are defined and changed, to investigate how the process of choice making itself takes place at the individual level. The nature of the data and data analysis are also issues that differentiate the two traditions. Quantitative research is often associated with numbers, tables, statistical analysis etc. (Hammersley 1992b: 41) and with ‘enumerative induction’ (Brennan, 1992: 5). The aim in this kind of research is to infer a characteristic or a relationship between variables in the sample population. Qualitative research on the other hand is often associated with words, narratives, verbal descriptions and presentations etc. and with ‘analytic induction’ (Brennan, 1992: 6) where the researcher looks for concepts and categories to form a hypothesis, to test and to verify it.

Another issue that arises from the two research traditions refers to issues of generalizability of the findings. This is often linked to the selection of samples to study. In quantitative research where the sample reflects the general population under investigation the findings may be generalised to the population. In qualitative research, which is not based upon statistical samples the question is whether the findings can be replicated in other similar cases (Brennan, 1992: 9). In qualitative research ‘sampling’ may be conducted on the basis of theoretical criteria (i.e. purposive sampling).

Both research paradigms have been endorsed or criticized by researchers. Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (2001:44,45) refer to issues that emerge as criticism of quantitative research methodology in researching young people's choice making in education. The most important criticism that they make is that by listing factors that influence educational choice and using factor analysis, there is an assumption of logical rationality of choice making that may not be valid. But

... if choice is the outcome of a process that brings together emotion, personal history, values, ideology and the implicit assumptions and aspirations of an individual's *habitus* ... then indicating or teasing out the role of individual 'objective' factors will be almost impossible (2001:45).

The critical points made above against quantitative approaches are not made to disregard the value of using such approaches in the study of educational choice. They are merely made to point out that although they reveal trends and patterns of choice making they offer little insights into how the actual process takes place at the experiential and interactive level. According to Hodgkinson and Sparkes, (1997:33) choice is dependent on personal histories, perceptions and interpretations of the influence of implicit and explicit socio-economic and cultural pressures. Thus, in order to develop a fuller understanding of educational choice making *processes* a researcher should draw on both traditions because macro scale analysis can reveal the broad trends and patterns of choice making whereas micro scale analysis can bring understanding of choice at the individual and personal interactive level. The above point to the need to be open to combining the merits of both traditions for the best possible outcomes when dealing with a research inquiry.

Below the rationale for adopting a mixed or multiple method technique for data collection for the present study is given.

5.2.1 Using mixed or multiple methods

As was commented on above, different methodologies can be used to offer different but complementary perspectives of the same social and educational reality. It was mentioned that in choice making for higher education, quantitative methods may reveal the general trends whereas a qualitative approach may offer in-depth understanding of the process itself. Depending on the kind of answers the researcher is looking for one methodology may be more suitable than another. In any case on the same research project one may argue that different methodologies can be used in

such a way that they would eventually complement each other and in the end offer suitable answers to the questions the research project addressed. This is often referred to as using 'multiple methods' (Brennan, 1992) or 'mixed methods' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998: 19) argue that the divide between quantitative and qualitative approaches should, nowadays, be considered to be outdated. Contemporary social scientists should be open to all methods and not be constrained by the arguments of the old debate between those in favour of qualitative or quantitative methods. Hammersley (1992b: 39) also argues that the very distinction between qualitative and quantitative paradigms in social research is of limited use. The important things, according to Hammersley, 'are the particular purposes of the research and the practicality of various strategies given the circumstances in which the inquiry is to be carried out' (Ibid) should be among the primary considerations when choosing the methods for a research project.

Many pragmatically oriented theorists and researchers prefer to use 'mixed methods' or 'mixed methodologies' where elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined within different phases of a research process. The nature of the research questions and the kind of answers sought, as well as the available resources should guide the researcher in the selection of the appropriate methods and not 'an ideological commitment to one or methodological paradigm or another' (Hammersley, 1992a: 163).

According to Brennan (1992: 12) regarding the use of multiple methods there is much controversy as to the conditions under which multiple methods ought to be combined. Some researchers have talked in terms of using the two approaches in a complementary manner whereby each approach is used in relation to a different research problem or different aspect of a research problem. Another approach is to combine research strategies to examine the same research problem (triangulation of the findings) and thus increase the validity of the conclusions reached by the data. The use of a mixed method approach in the present study was done in order to complement different aspects of the same research question, which is the way in which choice making is made in contemporary Cyprus. This was done because, as Bryman (1992:60,61) writes, among the various ways in which qualitative and

quantitative research may be combined, one is ‘to provide a general picture’ or to bridge the ‘macro’ with the ‘micro’ levels of social inquiry. He writes

Employing both quantitative and qualitative research may provide a means of bridging the macro-micro gulf. Quantitative research can often tap large-scale, structural features of social life, while qualitative research tends to address small-scale, behavioural aspects. When research seeks to explore both levels, integrating quantitative and qualitative research may be necessary (1992:61).

Following Brennan’s (1992: 16) advice that when using a multi-method approach the researcher needs to specify the particular aims of each method, the nature of the data that is expected to result and how the data relate to theory the particular reasons for choosing the methods that were chosen for this research are explained. In the present study, qualitative and quantitative methods were given equal weight since they responded to different but associated research questions and the two types of data collected were treated as complementary to each other.

In brief it needs to be said that no method is superior to the other nor is a combined research strategy. The research problem itself should make the use of a combined approach necessary, making the presence of the additional research approach (be it quantitative or qualitative) more than cosmetic (Bryman, 1992:69). Bryman also point that ‘quantitative and qualitative research are different, otherwise there would be no point in even discussing the possibility of combining them. They each have distinctive characteristics that make the possibility of combining them attractive’ (1992:75).

5.2.2 The selection of methods for the present study

For the purpose of offering answers to the particular research questions of the present study, which were presented in section 5.1.2, two groups of respondents needed to be approached in different ways. One group was the students who were graduating from the full range of secondary schools in Cyprus using a survey method through the use of a questionnaire and the other group was the students’ parents through the use of an in-depth interview. Through the analysis of the data elicited from this combined approach it was hoped to offer an understanding of the choice making process at two levels. At the macro level it would offer a general picture of the students and their secondary schooling, their families’ characteristics and of the patterns observed in the choices that students make at the end of their secondary schooling in terms of class,

gender, available resources etc. At a micro level, some critical aspects and procedures of the choice making process located within the familial environment would be investigated in-depth offering an understanding of the manner by which different kinds of families respond to the opportunities and constraints at that significant period in the lives of most young individuals.

The research design was constructed within a framework having primarily the research questions in mind, as was pointed out in the previous section, and also with reference to the relevant literature on educational choice-making and the particularities of the target society (Cyprus). Below the particular reasons that led to the decision to use a combination of two methods of data collection, administering questionnaires to a sample of secondary school students and personally interviewing a carefully selected sample of parents is presented. The decision to select these particular methods was taken for the following reasons:

- a) This study aimed first to provide a profile of the students who graduate from all kinds of secondary education in Cyprus, namely the General Lyceum (with its different specialisations), Technical schools and Private schools. The most practical way to access all these groups was through a questionnaire, which would provide the kind of data I could make use of. These data would include the family background of the students, indicators of student cultural capital, students' experiences and performance in secondary school, their plans for future educational and occupational destinations and their expectations regarding familial support.
- b) The administration of a questionnaire to students rather than any other kind of data collection tool would allow a wider spectrum of the secondary school student population to be covered. That meant, including students from different kinds of schools, students residing in different areas; urban, suburban and rural.
- c) Because in most cases active support from the schools' administration was anticipated the response rate to a questionnaire was expected to be very high which would have positive effects in the results¹.

¹ This anticipation was the product of my father in law's position in secondary education at the time. Being himself a secondary school head teacher and the vice-president of the head teachers association he was in a position to put me in contact with the head teachers of the selected schools and secure their

d) Also, practical reasons that had to do with resources that were available were among the factors that led to the decision that the administration of a questionnaire was a feasible choice.

e) The decision to conduct personal interviews with parents of students graduating from secondary education was influenced by the need to get at parents' understanding of the processes of status attainment in the Cypriot society and of the way parents viewed education's role in it. Also, I wanted to inquire about a rather sensitive issue in the context of the Cypriot society. This was the issue of "*mesa*" where people might be more willing to express their views in a personal interview but might be more reluctant when it came to express their views in another way, such through an impersonal questionnaire². Also, the interview would provide information that might allow me to move analytically into deeper understanding of how people reasoned when faced with several constraints and I would have the chance to probe for more details. The only limitation I had to face was that of the number of interviews that I would be able to conduct. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:102) mention that even though interviews are a powerful method of data collection, it is a very time consuming method and an expensive process if the interviews are to be properly analysed by a single researcher. Thus, this points to the need for a very well thought out selection of potential respondents, i.e. careful theoretical sampling.

active support in the administration of the questionnaires. This was extremely valuable in view of the fact that at the time (Spring 1999) there were cases where some schools were reluctant to participate in educational research, as they feared that it would interfere with the normal function of their school.

² People's reluctance to talk about issues that had to do with the use of *mesa* must be seen in relation to what was discussed in chapter 4. In particular, people might not want to express views that would give them a 'label', a characterisation that they belong or that they favour a particular group, party, organisation etc. It should be seen as part of many Cypriots strategy to keep as many networks, opportunities, doors as possible open. In a personal interview where the respondents would be reassured by the researcher about the purpose of the research and that their comments and views were going to be used confidentially this obstacle was expected to be overcome.

5.3 The development of the research tools

The previous section explained the rationale for the decision to adopt a multiple or mixed method approach. On the one hand, the aim was to investigate issues such as the educational and occupational choices that students make, their secondary education experiences, indicators of presence of cultural capital at home, and whether this in any way affected educational processes such as achievement in secondary school, as well as aspirations for future educational plans. On the other hand, the way parents from different sections of the social strata got involved in their children's schooling and choice making in education, the way they viewed, anticipated, believed that they would be in a position to help their children in their pursuit of achieving their future social position, was also important to be investigated. Specifically, how they saw themselves influencing their children's higher education and/or employment prospects.

In this research project a sequential approach consisting of a two-stage procedure was followed. At a first stage, questionnaires were administered to a sample of 445 students who were in their final year in secondary schools in Cyprus. At a second stage, based on the information gathered from the questionnaires 24 cases to carry out personal interviews with students' parents were selected. This section refers to the procedure followed for the development of the questionnaire and the interview schedule.

5.3.1 The development of the questionnaire

i. Some considerations for preparing the questionnaire

The preparation of the questionnaire was a process that took some considerable time to construct. In the questionnaire I wanted to include items that would cover the different aspects of the research questions that referred to the students' families and to their secondary schooling. A first draft of the questionnaire was prepared based on information gathered from different sources. These sources included, relevant literature and previous research projects (Tsoulouvi 1984, Katsillis and Robinson 1990, Eliophotou 1995) and the reality of the Cypriot educational system and society as this was formed through my personal knowledge and after discussions with professionals with knowledge and experience working with secondary students in

Cyprus. A first draft of the questionnaire that consisted of four parts was prepared. These parts covered areas such as the students' family background, cultural activities and reading habits, their secondary school experiences, and their choices for future destinations. Furthermore, it was important to test two ways of getting access to parents for interviews. To test the suitability of the items included in the first draft a pilot study was needed.

ii. The pilot study

Once a first draft of the questionnaire was developed it was essential that it be tried on some students similar to those included in the main study. This pilot study was crucial because apart from checking the suitability of the items included in it, it was necessary to check how students would respond to the question where they were being asked to provide their parents' name and telephone number for a follow up interview or whether they would prefer to be traced from an identification number that would be on the back of their questionnaire. Half of the questionnaires included the first way (providing their parents name and telephone number) and the other half the second way (identification number).

In February 1999 draft questionnaires were distributed to a random class of 31 students at a large urban Lyceum in Nicosia. Students were encouraged to make comments on the questionnaire both by responding to Question 2 in Part D (ways of getting access to parents) and also orally after they have completed the questionnaire. Their comments proved to be vital in the development of the final version of the questionnaire (particularly its format) that would be used at that part of the research.

Some students commented that it was an interesting questionnaire because it was asking questions on issues that were very timely for their lives at that period, namely their future plans after secondary school. Those comments provided me with encouragement and confidence that I was accessing some genuine issues and it was a good 'omen' for a successful completion of the questionnaires in the main study. Another comment that elicited a major change in the initial research design referred to the items that asked for information about the parents and grandparents. Many students indicated that they were not certain about some information particularly regarding their grandparents' education and thus they could not provide accurate

information about them. That pointed to the need to devise a separate part of the questionnaire that they could take at home to be completed by the parents, before or after the completion of the main part of the questionnaire by the students.

One other interesting input from the students concerned the issue of communication with the parents. Of the 15 questionnaires that had the item asking students to provide their parents' names and telephone number for a possible follow up interview, 12 provided that information. The students said afterwards that they did not object to offering that information in view of the fact that it had been explained to them that the purpose of the interview was to get the parents perspective of having a child graduating secondary education and how they coped with the different prospects that lay ahead for their children. In view of the students' response to this issue it was decided to include in the final questionnaire an item that asked students directly to provide their parents' contact information with view to a possible interview.

After the pilot study, adjustments were made to the questionnaire. Its final form can be seen in Appendix C. The final questionnaire was basically in two separated sections. The first one (orange coloured) was to be completed at home to get accurate information from the parents and the second one (white coloured) was to be completed at school. Next, a description of the two sets of the questionnaire in its final format is provided.

iii. The final version

As was already mentioned the questionnaire was basically administrated in two stages (Q1 and Q2). The items were grouped in four parts as follows:

- Part A: (Q1 and Section A in Q2, Items 1-4) Personal and family information

In the first part of the questionnaires (First set completed at home and items 1-4 in the second set which was completed at school) there were questions intending to get information about the students themselves and about their family background. These included questions about gender, their place of residence, whether the family lived together, the number of brothers and sisters and position in the sequence. There were also questions about the parents' occupation, the sector of their employment as well

as the highest level of education that they achieved. Similar questions about their grandparents' education and occupation were also included in order to get a picture of the family's social and educational history.

-Part B: (Section A in Q2 Items 5-9) Cultural activities and reading habits

In the second part of the questionnaire students were asked to indicate how often they did several activities such as attending musical concerts, theatrical plays, lectures, visited art galleries, museums, travelled abroad during the past year and whether they have taken part in activities such as music concerts, theatrical plays, lectures. In that question distracter items, which consisted of questions asking about whether students attended cinema, track and field events and football, basketball, and volleyball matches were included. Students were asked to indicate how often they had attended such events in the previous twelve months by ticking either never/once/twice/three times/ four times/ five times or more. They were also asked to indicate whether several educational/cultural resources were present in their house (item 6). Again several distracter items were included in the list. Items 7, 8 and 9 intended to get information about the students' reading habits in terms of literature, newspapers and magazines.

-Part C: (Section B In Q2) School and schooling experiences

In this part of the questionnaire students were asked about their experiences in secondary school particularly during their final year. Items 1, 2 and 3 asked about the name of their school and specialisation and whether they were satisfied with their choices. Item 4 asked about their achieved grade during the previous school year. This was the best way to get as accurate information as possible about the students' academic performance as information about their final grades of that year was not available. This was a strategy followed by Katsillis and Robinson (1990) in Greece and Eliophotou (1995) in Cyprus. Item 5 asked the students to indicate the amount of time they spent on their schoolwork, written and non-written. Items 6, 7 and 8 asked about students' tutorial lessons (*frontisteria*). They included questions about the kind of subjects they attended, the purpose for attending, the cost, who was paying for them and whose idea it was that they should attend such lessons.

-Part D: (Q2, Section C) Plans after secondary school and familial support

In this part of the questionnaire students were asked to indicate whether they were planning to continue their education after secondary school. Those who were planning to continue their studies were then asked to indicate the course that they were planning to pursue, their level of confidence that they would achieve entrance to their chosen field of study, the person(s) that influenced their choice and the most likely country where they thought they would most likely pursue their studies.

All students were asked to indicate the job they thought they would most likely end up with and their preferred sector for employment. Then, there was a question on whether they expected their family to help them in finding employment, followed by an open-ended question on how they expected their family might help them in that pursuit and also to specify their level of confidence in their family's ability to offer them help in the search for finding their preferred employment.

5.3.2 The development of the interview schedule

In this section I describe the development of the interview schedule and the processes of testing its suitability.

i. Some considerations for preparing the interview schedule

The interviews with parents were intended to obtain an understanding of their perspectives on their role in relation to their children's futures. They aimed to inquire about the strategies and the processes, which parents employed in order to secure the maximum educational prospects for their children and their reactions to the opportunities and constraints that lay ahead.

The interview schedule was developed in order to cover the following four areas:

- a) Ask parents to talk about their experiences from their own education and transition to the labour market. Also, to talk about their family background and the way it affected their own prospects within the social realities of their time. This was regarded as essential in the formulation of parents' attitudes towards processes of social advancement, including gender issues.

b) Enquire about the situation regarding the use of 'mesa' (social networks and connections) in Cyprus when they were at the point of seeking employment and whether (and in what ways) it affected their own occupational prospects.

c) Compare the situation regarding the use of 'mesa', social networks and connections for enhancing an individual's prospects during the period that they were seeking employment with contemporary Cyprus.

d) Evaluate the educational and occupational choices regarding the future destinations of their children. Their expectations and their aspirations for their children. The strategies they employed to secure maximum outcomes (*frontisteria*, private education etc.) Whether they are willing and capable of making use of possible connections they might have had to secure advantages for their children. What were their mechanisms to cope with lack of advantageous social connections.

ii. Pilot interviews

Before conducting the interviews two pilot interviews were carried out in order to finalise the interview schedule and to test if the questions were adequate to cover the topics to be covered. They also intended to familiarise the researcher with the topics of the interview and to serve as 'confidence-boosters' for the successful conduct of the intended interviews.

The two parents were selected using the contact information that the students supplied in the pilot questionnaires. The criteria for selecting these parents were basically their willingness to talk about the issues of this study. Both parents were contacted and agreed to take part in an interview regarding their experiences having a child graduating secondary education. Both expressed their interest in the matter over the phone, one of them saying that the issues that had to do with post school destinations etc. were issues that had a central place in their lives at that moment. That particular father sounded very keen to talk about the issues I was interested in³. The interviews took place at the respondents' houses. The pilot interviews pointed to the need to focus on a particular substantive theme I had perhaps underplayed till

then, the issue of *frontisteria* as both parents started immediately to talk extensively about that issue when asked about the secondary schooling of their children.

iii. The final version of the interview schedule

The interview schedule started with an introduction to the purpose of the research and by assuring the participant respondents about the confidentiality with which the data would be treated and thanking them in advance for their willingness to take part in the study.

The interview schedule (see Appendix C) consisted, basically, of two parts. The first part started with some questions about the respondents themselves their schooling experiences, their family background at the time they were at their children's age, their experiences of moving from schooling to the labour market or to higher education and about their current occupation and position. On the issue of how they entered the labour market the role of '*mesa*' was investigated, its importance then, its effectiveness and whether they made any use of such a resource. Also, how they viewed its development over time to its present form. Those issues were important in order to gain an understanding of the parents' attitudes to issues regarding the processes of achieving social goals.

The second part of the interview schedule referred to the children, their children's secondary school realities and the choices made thus far in relation to the kind of school their children attended and their particular specialisation. One major aspect of that part of the conversation was about the role of *frontisteria* in their children's schooling, what they thought of that institution, how they got information about these lessons and the processes of selecting *frontisteria* for their children. Then the interview schedule had questions that aimed to get parents to talk about their aspirations and expectations for their children's further education and/or occupational prospects. Parents were asked about the role of their child's gender in these aspirations and expectations.

³ His comments proved to be very useful in finalising the interview schedule and to gain confidence about the task at hand.

The final part in the interview schedule had questions aiming to get parents talking about the different opportunities and constraints their children were facing. Also, there were questions about the various resources they thought they had available to mobilise to help their children in their search for employment and the extent to which they were willing to actively help their children's effort to find employment. Specifically, parents were asked about the kind of social networks and connections they thought they had available to mobilise, their level of confidence about their network's effectiveness and whether they were willing to resort to them for help. Also, there were questions asking parents to talk about possible ways of coping with a lack of that resource or unwillingness to make use of it. The respondents were encouraged to illustrate their responses with anecdotes and observations.

5.4 In the field

This section describes the procedure that was followed in order to gather necessary empirical data to address the research questions of this study. It describes the secondary school student sample, where the questionnaires were administered and the sample of parents that were interviewed. Finally, it outlines the procedure for administering the questionnaire and the conduct of the interviews.

5.4.1 The timeline

Figure 5.1 presents the timeline followed for the collection of the data. By December'98, after spending one and a half years reviewing the literature and previous research the aims of the present research were specified. The timing for conducting the empirical research was the most appropriate because by the end of February students are asked by their schools to finalise their choices as to their selected future educational destinations so the answers that they would give to a questionnaire would refer to decisions already made rather than intended ones.

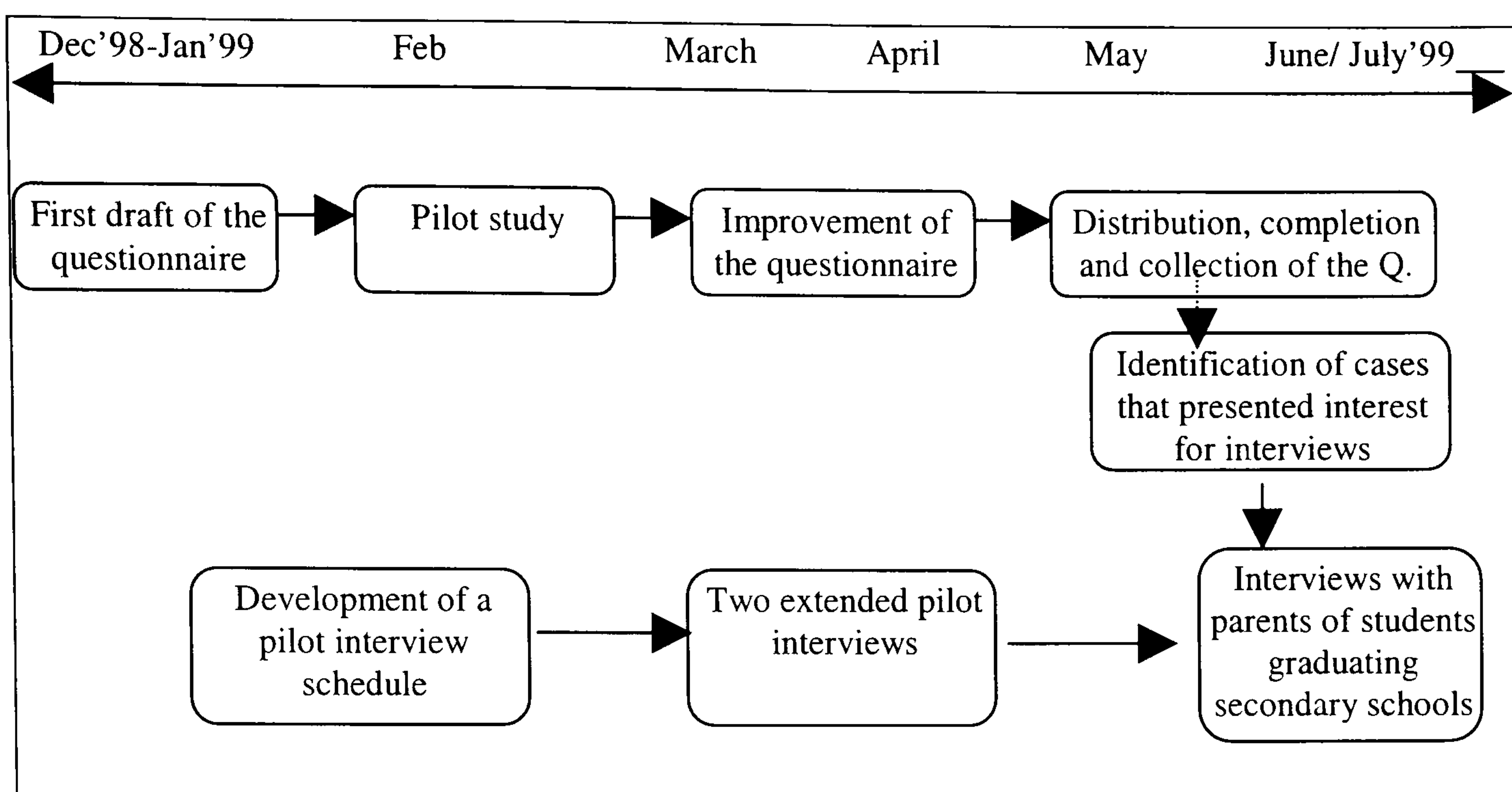


Figure 5.1: Timeline of the steps followed in the research

5.4.2 The secondary student sample and the administration of the questionnaires

The population of this study consisted of the students graduating from secondary education in Cyprus during the year 1998-99 and their parents. During that year the whole secondary school student population in Cyprus consisted of nearly 62 000 students. Of them a little more than 40 per cent attended schools in the capital city of Nicosia or the Nicosia district. As far as the kind of schools that these students attended is concerned, 82.3 per cent attended General Secondary Public schools, 7.8 per cent attended Technical Secondary Public schools and 9.9 per cent attended Private schools. In the year 1998-99 around 8 470 students graduated from all kinds of secondary schools in Cyprus. Of them 76.2 per cent graduated from General Secondary Public schools, 14.1 per cent were graduating Technical Secondary Public schools and 9.5 per cent graduated from Private schools.

In order to get a representative sample of the secondary school student population attending all kinds of schools and specialisations it was decided to perform a three-stage cluster sampling procedure (Shofield, 1996:34-6) from secondary schools in the Nicosia town and district. The selection of the Nicosia town and district was made because it is by far the largest district of Cyprus and has similar socio-economic characteristics with the rest of the island⁴. Restricting the research to one district

⁴ It has to be remembered that Cyprus is relatively a small island (around 9 000 Km²).

schools in different geographical areas (urban, suburban, rural) would be covered adequately. Furthermore, the schools in Nicosia have similar characteristics to schools in other areas of Cyprus, due to the highly centralised system of education in Cyprus and there is no reason to assume that the results would differ from other districts of Cyprus. A similar tactic was followed by Eliophotou (1995) who studied a similar group of students.

The first stage of the sampling procedure was to identify the schools to be researched. These were: ten public Lyceums in Nicosia district (8 in urban or suburban areas and 2 in rural areas), 3 Technical schools and 12 private schools⁵ (of different size and specializations). At a second stage, from these schools 4 urban/suburban and 1 rural Lyceums, 1 Technical school and 2 big private English-speaking schools were selected. At a third stage, from the selected schools 20 classes were chosen from different specializations and all students who were present in the school on that day were asked to take part in the research.

	General Lyceum		Technical		Private		TOTAL	
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
Population	2581	3765	993	204	394	417	3968	4386
%	(30.4)	(44.4)	11.7	2.4	4.6	4.9	48.2	51.8
TOTAL	6462		1197		811		8470	
%	(76.2)		(14.1)		(9.5)		(100)	
Sample	99	186	51	14	25	29	175	229
%	(24.5)**	(46.0)	12.6	3.4	6.1	7.1	(43.3)**	56.7
TOTAL	287		65		54		404	
%	(70.6)*		(16.1)		(13.3)		(100)	

Notes

* The percentage in the sample is lower because experimental unified Lyceums, evening and special secondary schools were not included in the sample.

** The lower percentages in the sample can be attributed to non-response or inadequate response (and thus rejected) by some boys.

Table 5.1: The population and the sample of the study

The proportions of the students in the sample in terms of the kind of school they attended and of gender roughly corresponded to the proportion of students in the

⁵ For the purposes of the present study I was interested to include only the private English-speaking schools, which attracted a distinct kind of students, namely those who would most likely pursue higher education in English-speaking universities. In fact, the very purpose of these schools is to prepare students for such a route.

overall student population attending different kinds of schools. As far as the students' residence was concerned 66.8% of the students were residing in urban or suburban areas of Nicosia whereas 33.2% were residing in rural areas. The geographical setting of the school (be it urban or rural) does not provide clear indications as to the composition of its students in terms of their place of residence (urban or rural). And this is so because many students residing in rural areas travel daily to Nicosia to attend secondary school. There are many reasons for that. One is because the rural schools (Lyceums) are relatively small and sometimes do not have all specializations for the students living in rural areas to choose from. Another reason is the very small road distances and the relatively good condition of the road network, which allows many students living near the town to commute daily to Nicosia⁶. Also, if a student wants to attend a technical or private school these are located only in Nicosia town.

Unlike other research that has been carried out earlier in Cyprus and tended to exclude obtaining data from students attending private schools, for this research it was essential to include this group of students, because it is a very particular and interesting group in terms of their family background and their social class origin.

In the 20 chosen classes covering the full range of schools and specializations 445 questionnaires were distributed to the students that were present in the school on that day. Of them, 404 were included in the study in the end. Some of them (N=18) had a lot of missing information (i.e. part A was missing), which made them unusable⁷. The very high response rate (90.8 %) was to a certain extent anticipated because the administration, the completion and the collection of the questionnaires was done in the classrooms and it had the active support of the school's administration. In a few cases the head teachers or in other cases an assistant head teacher or another senior

⁶ The furthest rural community in the Nicosia district is less than an hour's drive from the Nicosia town.

⁷ A common feature in some of the questionnaires that were returned but in the end were not included in the study was that only the first few items were answered. I can only make some speculations about the non-respondents. Based on my observations I suppose that a typical non-respondent student would be a male student who appeared to be disinterested about the purpose and the nature of this study when he heard about it. I suppose that he would be one of those students who were at the school just to get their '*apolytirio*' (secondary school leaving certificate). Some secondary school teachers commented that such a student would 'very carefully' calculate the amount of absences he could afford to make without failing to graduate and he would make them. Four months away from graduation he could not wait to get it over, with as little work as possible. The above comments are speculative but if one looks at Table 5.1 one can see that more male students than female did not respond or failed to respond properly.

member of staff accompanied me and was present when the questionnaires were administered. This did not allow much room for dropouts. Other research that was carried out in Cyprus secondary schools with the same population under investigation and under similar conditions (Eliophotou, 1995) elicited similar response rates precisely for the same reason, namely, the researcher being present at the administration of the questionnaire under the active support of the school's administration.

The first part of the questionnaire (part A) was usually given to the students the day before they were to complete part B. On a few occasions, when this was not possible, part A was given to students after part B was completed to be taken at home and be brought back the following day.

5.4.3 The sample of parents

To obtain a group of parents in order to get their perspectives on the issues relating to their children graduating secondary education it was decided to perform a theoretical purposive sampling. In purposive sampling the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the sample according to a specific purpose (Cohen, 2000:103). The interviews intended to investigate the views and attitudes of parents coming from three different social classes, namely, the professional middle class, the intermediate lower middle class and the working class. It was also important to include parents who experienced various degrees of social mobility themselves because this could offer different perspectives on the way different parents reasoned social achievement could be realized. The gender of their child was another criterion. Parents of male and female students were included in the sample. To obtain these three sample groups the information that was gathered from the questionnaires, particularly those that referred to the occupation of the parents and the sector of employment was examined. As to the number of cases to be chosen according to Brennan (1992:9-10) there are no definitive guidelines but 'a balance need[ed] to be struck between the point of theoretical saturation and the availability of time and money'. For each sample group 8 cases were selected because it was felt they were adequate to cover a wide spectrum of parents from each social class group and a single researcher could manage the data that would be collected from such a number of cases. Table 5.2

below summarises the information on the 24 cases that were eventually interviewed. It needs to be said that these cases were not the ones initially selected. As is noted in the next section there were cases where some parents were reluctant to take part in an interview. In those cases those parents were substituted by other parents with similar characteristics.

Parents

Students

Case No	Pseudonyms of interviewee	Father's job	Father's education	Mother's job	Mother's education	Stud. gender	Students' school	Student Grade*(1)	Plans to study	Where
1.	Mrs Dimou	Civil Engin	Univ in Brit.	Bank employee	College	male	private	1	Economics	Britain
2.	Mr, Mrs Yiorgiou	Lawyer	Univ in Gr.	Designer	College	female	private	1	Law	Britain
3.	Mr Paris	Trader	Univ in Brit.	Housewife	College	male	private	3	Law	Britain
4.	Mr Konstantinou	Employee in a private company	College in Br.	Bank clerk	College	male	Lyceum S3	4	Accountancy	College in Cyprus
5.	Mr Fotiou	Doctor	Univ in Gr.	Housewife	University	female	LyceumS2	3	English literature	Britain
6.	Mr and Mrs Loizou	Senior Civil Servant	Univ in Gr.	Senior Civil servant	University	male	Lyceum S2	2	Applied Mathematics	Greece
7.	Mr Simou	Ass. H/ teacher Sec. School	Univ in Gr.	Civil servant	Secondary	male	Lyceum S2	1	Primary teacher	Cyprus
8.	Mr and Mrs Kosta	Agronomist (Sen. Civ. Ser.)	Univ in Gr.	Bank employee	Secondary	female	Lyceum S1	1	Greek literature	Greece
9.	Mr Nikolaou	Food shop owner	College in Gr.	Housewife	Secondary	female	Lyceum S3	3	Primary teacher	Cyprus
10.	Mr and Mrs Andreou	Petrol shop owner	Secondary	Bank clerk	Secondary	female	Lyceum S3	4	Primary teacher	Greece
11.	Mr Athou	Sales Manag. semi-pub. org	College	Secretary	Secondary	male	Private	4	Busin.Law	Britain
12.	Mr Kostaki	Ass. Accountant	Secondary	Housewife	Secondary	female	Lyceum S3	4	Psychology	USA
13.	Mr and Mrs Sotiriou	Bank employee	Secondary	Insurance	Secondary	male	Lyceum S2	2	Mathematics	Cyprus
14.	Mr Michael	Police officer	Secondary	Junior civil serv.	Secondary	male	Lyceum S2	2	Elect. Engineer	Greece
15.	Mr Daniel	Technician	Secondary	Ass. accountant	Secondary	female	Lyceum S5	2	Speech Therapist	Coll. in Cyp.
16.	Mr Christodoulou	Owns furnit. work shop	Secondary	Housewife	Secondary*(2)	male	Lyceum S4	4	Speech Therapist	Greece
17.	Mrs Antoniou	Car mechanic	Primary*(2)	Housewife	Secondary*(2)	female	Lyceum S4	5	-	-
18.	Mrs Teresa	Furniture worker	Secondary	Housewife	Secondary	male	Lyceum S2	5	-	-
19.	Mr Argyiou	Barber	Primary	Housewife	Primary	female	Lyceum S4	5	-	-
20.	Mrs Agapiou	Taxi driver	Secondary*(2)	Housewife	Primary	female	Lyceum S3	6	Nurse	Cyprus
21.	Mrs Litsa	Iron worker	Secondary	Hairdresser	Secondary*(2)	female	Lyceum S2	2	Primary teacher	Cyprus
22.	Mr Michalis	Traditional confectioner	Primary	Housewife	Primary*(2)	male	Lyceum S3	4	-	-
23.	Mr Anastasiou	Factory Worker	Secondary	Dressmaker	Primary	male	Lyceum S1	3	Journalism	Cyprus
24.	Mr Apostolou	Office worker	Secondary	Housewife	Secondary	male	Lyceum S2	4	Greek literature	Greece

* (1) Student academic achievement (Grade point average achieved in year 5) 1. 19,1-20 2. 18,1-19 3. 17,1-18 4. 16,1-17 5. 15,1-16 6. 14,1-15 7. below 14

* (2) Did not graduate

Table 5.2: Summary of general characteristics of the interview cases

To categorise the family into a social class group the procedure used, is described in section 5.5. Briefly on this point this approach considers both parents' occupational status. For the interviews I was very happy to ask both parents to participate when possible. In some cases, as will be explained later, it was only the mothers that took part in the interview, either because the fathers could not attend or because the fathers thought that the mothers might be in a better position to talk about the issues that I was interested in. On other occasions it was just the father who participated in the interview.

Group A (Professional middle class parents)

The first group of parents consisted of fathers who held professional jobs, were in high administrative positions or owned large businesses. Most of the mothers held professional or intermediate jobs. All the fathers had received university education whereas six of the mothers had received university/college education and two secondary. The fathers of this group included a lawyer, a businessman, two senior civil servants, a medical doctor, a deputy secondary school head teacher, a civil engineer and an executive member of a large imports company. The mothers were: one senior bank employee, a senior civil servant, a designer, a civil servant, two bank clerks and two housewives.

Group B (Intermediate/ lower middle class parents)

The second group consisted of fathers who held middle status jobs, were self-employed or owned medium or small businesses. They included a food shop owner, a petrol station owner, a bank clerk, a police officer, a technician in a semi-public organisation, a furniture workshop owner and two semi-public organisation employees. Most of them had graduated from secondary school. Two attended two-year college courses. Five of the mothers were white-collar office workers and three were housewives. All of them were secondary school graduates.

Group C (Working class parents)

The third group consisted of fathers in working class jobs. The jobs in this category included: a car mechanic; a taxi driver; a traditional sweets, small shop owner; a barber; an employee (worker) in a printing office; a farmer, a builder and a shoe factory worker. Some of them were primary school graduates and some attended

secondary school. Six of the mothers were housewives, one was a dressmaker and another a hairdresser. Most of the mothers were primary school graduates or were secondary school dropouts. Only two were secondary school graduates.

5.4.4 The procedure for conducting the interviews

In this section the procedure followed to obtain the selected sample of parents is described. As was seen in the previous section they represented a wide spectrum in terms of occupation, sector of employment and educational background. Their children were male and female and attended various kinds of secondary schools. All agreed to be interviewed.

After the completion and the collection of the questionnaires a first examination of the information concerning the parents was carried out. Almost 80 per cent of the returned questionnaires included parents' first names and telephone number. The high response to that question can be attributed to two reasons. The first one was that when the questionnaires were given this was done with the active support of the schools' administration, something that made the students realise that it should be taken seriously and answered with caution (see high response rate). The second reason was because of the assurances given by the researcher that the purpose of the meetings with the parents was to discuss issues that had to do with parents' points of view and experiences.

The parents were first contacted by telephone. The purpose of the study was briefly explained to them. The researcher introduced himself and asked for a meeting for an interview. All the parents from the first and second group responded positively and meetings were arranged either in their homes in the afternoons or, in some cases, the researcher was invited to their work places when it was convenient for them. With the third group of respondents things did not develop as smoothly as with the first two groups. The reason for that was because, I believe, some parents in this category did not fully understand the purpose of the research, who the researcher was and whether there was a 'hidden agenda' behind this contact. On three occasions when the parents on the initial list were called to request a meeting their reaction towards me seemed to be as if they were trying to avoid somebody who indirectly was trying to sell them something over the telephone! They seemed very suspicious about the

researcher and his intentions and on two occasions they politely refused to take part in the study, not offering any real reason for their refusal. On a third occasion after some time when the researcher was desperately trying to explain who he was and assure a reluctant parent (furniture workshop worker) that what he was doing was a personal research, the man reacted angrily saying

... listen, I don't know you, I don't know what you are doing, what your aims are or who you represent ... the thing is I don't want you to bother me with what you are doing ...

and hung up the telephone.

The fact that in some cases some parents from the third group did not fully understand the aim of the research despite rigorous explanation (I had rehearsed various introductions of the researcher and the research, see Appendix C: "Interview Schedule") was not always just an impression. It was a fact that was illustrated to me in the following incident with a woman (mother) from this group. As the interview was taking place in the family's living room her younger son, a 12 year-old, entered the room. The conversation was interrupted and the mother said to the young boy:

Christo where are your manners? Say 'Hello' to our visitor. This is a gentleman who is doing a ... '*statistic*' about young people ...

On other occasions some people, again from the third group, felt a bit uncomfortable when they saw my tape-recorder. When I asked their permission to record the interview two of them said that they would rather I did not. On those occasions that the parents did not want me to use the tape-recorder I had to rely on the notes that I was taking as the conversation was going on as well as on the notes I was taking immediately afterwards in my car when the interview was over.

Something else that happened on some occasions that was beyond my control was that when the interview seemed to be coming to an end and I was switching off the tape recorder the parents were starting to say extremely interesting things (on one occasion in the family's door step). Evidently, I could not interrupt them to set the tape recorder on. Again on these occasions I took notes of what these people told me immediately afterwards. On some occasions some fathers responded that it was difficult for them take part in the interview either because of their work or because they thought that the mother would be more helpful for the things that I was interested in talking about. In these cases they referred me to the mothers.

In contrast to some of the parents from the third group (working class) who often gave the impression of not fully realising the purpose and the aims of the present research, parents from the other two groups and especially from the first group (professional middle class) seemed to be impressed by the fact that I was a Ph.D. student at a British university. It was possible that they aspired the same for their children. In fact in some cases they expressed those aspirations during the interviews. That is, that they valued the kind of education I seemed to be getting (at a British University) a lot more than other kinds of higher education.

Another characteristic that impressed me during the interviews with these groups was the contrast in the way in which people from the two social extremes of the sample were responding to the questions. For the parents of the first group the interview appeared to be a natural conversation, probably with issues that they have talked about on many occasions. They were very relaxed, very informed and confident with their answers and the comments that they were making. At the beginning, some wanted to know more about me who I was and exactly what my research was about, about my studies, where I was studying etc. Throughout our conversation they were critical of a number of educational issues (i.e. the issue of *frontisteria*, the entrance examinations system, teacher-student relationships etc.). Their answers were usually long and often they commented and referred to issues that they thought were relevant to our discussion. In that respect, they appeared to have a kind of cultural capital that was allowing them to recognise the benefits and opportunities that the educational system could offer to their children. On the other hand, the parents from the third group were very cautious of what they were saying. On some occasions I felt that they were using the interview to verify information that they have heard. Their answers were mostly short and, as was said previously, some gave the impression that they were not absolutely clear as to the motivations of the researcher.

All the interviews provided very rich data on all the issues of interest for the present study. These data needed to be transcribed and properly analysed. The transcribing process was very time consuming. More time was spent, however, in analysing the data elicited from the interviews.

5.5 Some issues relating to the analysis of the data

Once the questionnaires were collected and the interviews completed the long and tedious process of entering the questionnaire data in the SPSS programme and of transcribing the interviews was undertaken. After the completion of that process both the quantitative and qualitative data was analysed. In this section the way the different families were classified into social classes and how the concepts of cultural and social capital were operationalised and used in the analysis, is presented.

5.5.1 Social class

An important factor in the analysis of the data both qualitative and quantitative related to the issue of the way different families might be categorised into social classes. For this study Nash's (1995: 42,43 and 68,69) assumption that families, rather than individuals, should be regarded as class located has been adopted. Previous research tended to classify families by the occupational status of its primary wage earner who in most cases was the father. In today's world, however, when more and more women are working it should not be acceptable to disregard their contribution in determining the family's social class.

An eleven-point scale of social class was constructed based on the classification used by the Department of Statistics of Cyprus and Christodoulou's (1995) description of the modern Cypriot class structure. Based on the information gathered by the questionnaires, which referred to the parents, both parents were classified separately into the following 11 categories:

- I. professionals self employed
- II. managers and owners of large or medium enterprises
- III. privileged employees (professionals) in public or private sector
- IV. small entrepreneurs
- V. employees in the technical section
- VI. employees in sub/lower professional section
- VII. intermediate/clerical/middle status posts in private or public sectors
- VIII. lower white collar workers
- IX. manual skilled and semi-skilled workers
- X. full time farmers and part time farmers with other job
- XI. not working

After that, taking into account the occupational category that both parents belonged to, a seven-point scale was generated. The rationale behind this procedure was based on arguments similar to Nash's (1993) in his study of the family class structure of

New Zealand. Professional families, for example, are those where at least one parent is professionally employed. When both parents work and one is not professionally employed he or she should be engaged at least in an occupation at white collar level. When one parent is employed at a lower level occupation then the family is classified as Professional-Mixed. Similar procedures were used for the other categories as well. This new scale referring to the family was as follows:

- I. professional
- II. professional-mixed
- III. technical/intermediate
- IV. technical/intermediate-mixed
- V. small entrepreneurs/self employed (non-professional)
- VI. lower white collar/manual
- VII. other (not working)

In the sample of the present study nearly 40% (N=160) of the mothers were not working and thus only the occupation of the father was used in the classification of a family into a social class. When the seven-point scale was employed it was revealed that categories II, IV and VII were very small. This suggested two things: a) that there is a high degree of marriage between people employed in occupations of similar status and b) there is a very small number of unemployed people in the age group between 45 and 55. In view of the above it was decided to merge categories I and II into one (Professional middle class), III, IV and V into another (Intermediate, lower middle class)⁸ and VI and VII into a third (Working). This three-point scale was used in the cross tabulation and presentation of data. The families included in the present study were classified as follows: 18.1% (N=73) of the families were classified as professional middle class, 38.4% (N=155) were included in the intermediate lower middle class category and 43.6% (N=176) were classified as working class.

The family's social class points to distinctions that go beyond simple characterisations in terms of the occupational status of both parents. Social class typically implies distinctive differences in the distribution of capital in all its forms. As was pointed out previously, this study looks closely at the distribution of non-monetary forms of capital among the different social classes in order to investigate

⁸ Moshonas (1993:273-276) describes this social group in the modern Greek society as the product of the mass transition of the agrarian population to the urban centres whereby the population took up paid employment in middle position, white collar occupations in the state and private sectors as well as self employed sub-professionals and owners of small-size enterprises. In the context of the Cypriot society the lower middle class corresponds to a similar description.

their effects in educational processes and of the choices that young people and their families make for the students' future prospects.

5.5.2 Operationalising cultural capital and other variables used in the analysis of quantitative data

In Chapter 2 there was extensive reference to various studies that operationalised the concept of cultural capital in order to apply it in empirical research (quantitative or qualitative) in the educational field. In view of the criticisms that were presented in the operationalisation of cultural capital in a single manner (i.e. by measuring attendance to cultural activities and events) this study approached the issue of the operationalisation of cultural capital in a way that integrated previous attempts (see Section 2.4.2). As such, cultural capital was examined at two levels; at the student level and at the level of the parents. The first was explored at the quantitative part of the research and the second at the qualitative part by investigating parental knowledge of educational processes and ability to get involved and negotiate effectively with the educational system for the benefit of their child. This section describes the procedure followed to define the variables that were used to measure students' cultural capital. Moreover, this section presents the different other variables that were used in the quantitative data analysis with their mean and standard deviation scores.

The study by Katsillis and Robinson (1990) in Greece (see Chapter 2) was a study that indicated some methodological directions on how to approach the operationalisation of student cultural capital. Katsillis and Robinson (1990) used attendance to four cultural activities as indicators of presence of cultural capital among Greek secondary school students. Along with other approaches which have expanded this model of measurement of indicators of presence of cultural capital it was decided in this study to include two other facets of cultural capital: ownership of cultural/educational objects (Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999) and students' literature reading habits (De Graaf et al., 2000) other than those required by school.

One of the aims of this study was to investigate whether students from various social classes possessed different amounts of cultural capital as might be manifested in their

cultural practices, the presence of cultural educational objects in their home and in their literature reading habits. The aim of the above investigation was to see whether they were influencing in a distinctive way the educational prospects of students coming from different social class backgrounds (academic achievement and level of educational aspirations). As far as which cultural activities could be used in the measurement, the following procedure was followed. In the questionnaire students were asked to indicate whether they participated to a number of events. Students were asked to indicate how many times they have attended one of the above in the previous year. In the analysis the score 5 was given if students attended at least once to all 5 activities and 0 if they attended to none⁹. An alpha reliability test was run for the different cultural activities indicating that five activities were clustering together. These activities were: attendance to theatre, lectures and concerts and visits to museums and art galleries. The alpha score was 0.715. As was said previously, Katsillis and Robinson (1990) in their study of the effect of cultural capital on student achievement in Greece, which bears many similarities to the Cyprus social setting, used four of these activities as indicators of cultural capital (attendance to theatre and lectures and visits to museums and art galleries).

The cultural/educational objects that the students were asked to indicate they had them at home were: a personal computer, Internet access, encyclopaedia, library, authentic art works. Score 5 was given if all these objects were present whereas 0 if none was present. Students were also asked to indicate how many literature books they had read in the previous 12 months other than those required by the school. Again score 5 indicated that students read 5 or more books whereas 0 meant that they read none. Table 5.3 presents the above variables as well as other variables that were used in the quantitative analysis of data with their mean and standard deviation scores.

⁹ Researchers such as DiMaggio (1986), De Graaf (1986), Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (1986) Lamb (1989), Roscigno and Ainsworth-Daniels (1999) used these indicators to measure cultural capital.

Variable	Description	Metric	Mean	SD
Cultural activities	Students attended at least once theatre, museum, concert, art gallery, lecture	0= none of these activities 5= at least once in all the activities	1.80	1.54
Cultural/educational resources	Personal computer, Internet, Encyclopaedia, Library, Authentic artwork	0=none present at home 5=all present at home	2.17	1.57
Literature	Number of books read in the past year	0=none 5=five or more	1.54	1.96
Students' school achievement	Grade point average in 5 th grade in the Lyceum/ Technical/ Private school ¹⁰	1= below 14 7= 19,1-20	3.74	1.92
Students educational aspirations	Students first choice for their future educational plans	1=No plans for studies 4=High professional courses	2.54	0.98
Upper middle class	Students' social class origin	0=other 1=Upper middle class	0.17	0.38
Working class	Students' social class origin	0=other 1=Working class	0.44	0.50
Gender	Male or Female	0=Female 1=Male	0.44	0.50
Students' effort	Hours students spend on average on school related work	0=none 7=more than three hours	3.45	1.90

Table 5.3: Descriptions, Means and Standard Deviations of the variables used in the analysis

5.5.3 Investigating cultural and social capital in the qualitative dimensions of the research

In addition to the investigation of student cultural capital through their activities, habits and possessions the examination of the presence of cultural capital in the family took another form. Through interviewing parents of students graduating from secondary education the aim was to investigate whether cultural capital was an element in parents' resources that was being utilised in order to influence the opportunities of their children. As such, positive cultural capital, for example, consisted of the knowledge of the educational system, the knowledge required for successful negotiation to find the most effective and suitable *frontisteria*, knowledge

¹⁰ Some private schools use different ways of measuring students' progress i.e. they use grades such as A, B, C etc. In public schools they use arithmetic scores out of 20. The private school students' scores

of the various options and of the procedures for successful progress to higher education etc. This kind of cultural capital could have implications among other issues for the successful mobilisation of ‘proper’ social networks and connections available to a family to promote the interests of their children.

The investigation of familial social capital took methodologically the same route as that of the examination of parental cultural capital. Through interviewing various types of parents the aim was to get insight into the nature of their social networks, their perceptions about their effectiveness, ways of coping with possible shortcomings etc. For this study social capital referred to connections to various social networks that had the potential of offering returns to families in relation to children’s education, choice making and securing future opportunities in the labour market. Moreover, this study aimed to investigate access potentials, willingness to make use of such a traditional practice in contrast to possible modern practices (seeking more transparent, meritocratic procedures), whether gender played a part in parental readiness to seek the help of such networks.

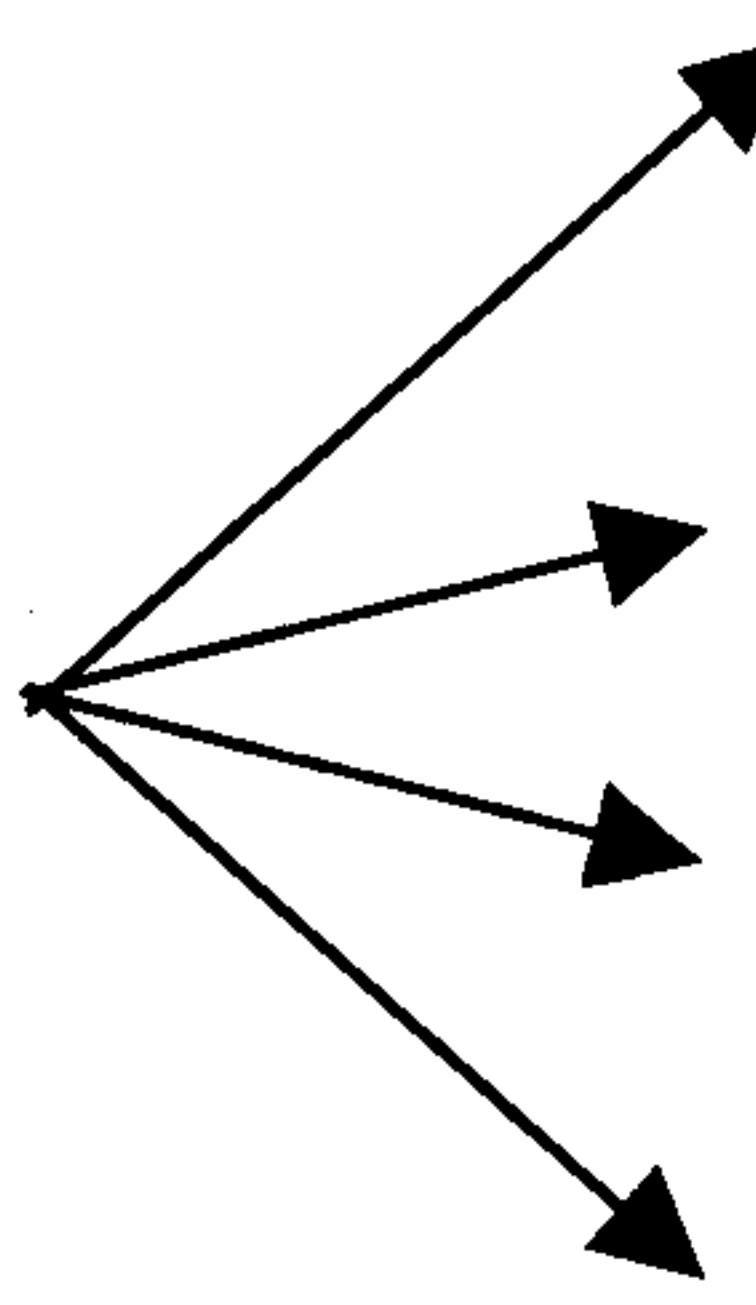
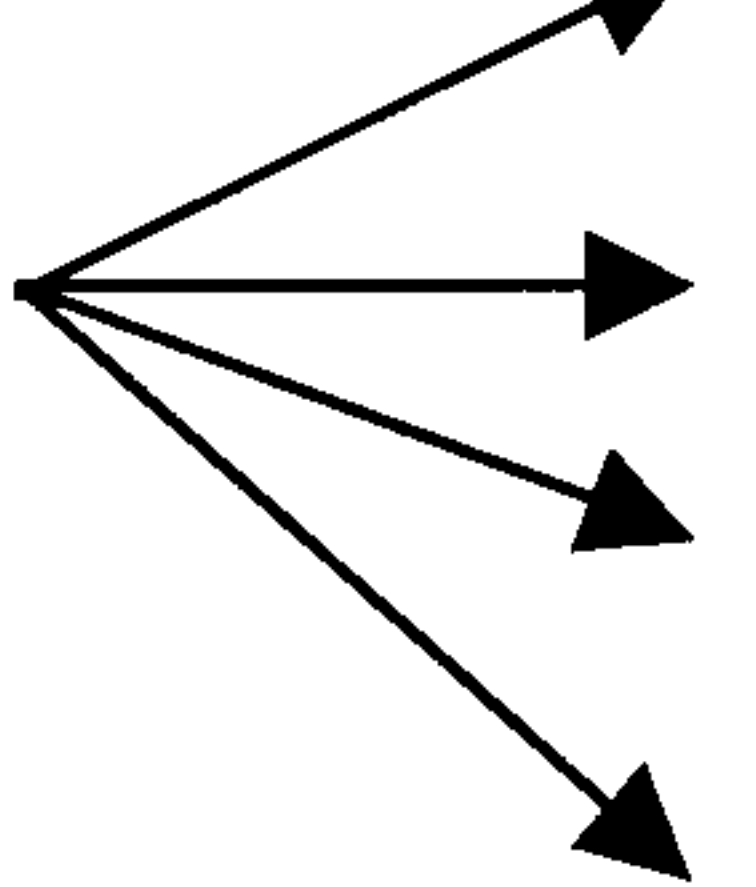
Parental cultural capital 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. knowledge of the various prospects the educational system offers 2. knowledge of the various options for post secondary education 3. successful engagement in processes for entering their children to <i>frontisteria</i> 4. knowledge of how the system of mobilising social networks ‘<i>mesa</i>’ operates
Social capital 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. degree of involvement in various social networks 2. kind of social networks which can be educationally beneficial 3. kind of social networks which can potentially realise occupational aspirations 4. willingness to make use of social networks

Table 5.4: Description of cultural and social capital from interviews

The parental cultural capital connects with the amount and the ‘quality’ of social capital that is available for mobilisation in facilitating choice making in education.

were converted to arithmetic so that they could be comparable to the ones of students in public schools.

The inter-relationship between the two forms of capitals will be an issue that will be explored in subsequent chapters.

5.6 Summary

This chapter presented the rationale for adopting the particular methods that were employed for this study's empirical investigation. After the specific research questions/hypotheses were formulated, it was argued that a mixed methods strategy would be preferable for the collection and analysis of data to address them. Then the way the research tools were developed and the procedures that were followed to gather the data were presented. Finally, the methodological procedures in the operationalisation of social class and of the concepts of social and cultural capital were outlined.

Before moving to the presentation of the findings it is important to bear in mind that regarding the operationalisation of the concepts of cultural and social capital the following points need to be made. We need to acknowledge the limitations of trying to find indicators of the presence of cultural capital in the home and then attempting to measure it in a quantitative manner. This is because quantitative methods cannot explore with sufficient subtlety the extent to which certain cultural activities, objects and habits become an effective form of capital to influence educational processes. And so, using these quantitative indicators to identify the presence of cultural capital in the home environment is superficial with respect to the social dynamics of how cultural capital potentially influences prospects in education. The use of qualitative methods where the researcher may probe for details into the practices, habits, beliefs, attitudes etc. of the respondents can potentially address these limitations in the investigation of the effects of cultural capital in a person's educational practices. The same could be said for selecting qualitative research methods for the investigation of the effects of social capital. With these caveats in mind in relation to the issue of cultural and social capital measurement we move now to the presentation of the findings of the empirical investigation.

Chapter 6:

Choice making for future destinations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the analysis of the educational and occupational choices that students graduating from secondary education make for their future. These findings provide a broad picture of the different patterns that can be observed in choice making in relation to social class, gender and kind of school/specialisation students attend. The issues that arise from these patterns will be addressed in the next two subsequent chapters.

6.2 The educational aspirations of students graduating from secondary education

This section looks into the educational aspirations of students graduating secondary education. First, it looks at the intentions of students to pursue higher education. This is done with reference to gender, social class and kind of secondary education that they attend. In relation to the latter (kind of secondary education), it is examined whether the general notion that some specialisations ‘lead’ to higher academic pursuits will be confirmed. The actual field of study the students reported that they intended to pursue is examined. The place where students intend to pursue higher studies is investigated next in view of the importance that it may have on the qualifications that an individual acquires. This is examined with reference to their social class background and to their gender. Can clear social class and gender patterns be observed?

6.2.1 Intention to pursue post-secondary education

-Social class and gender

Looking at the intention to pursue higher education in relation to gender it can be clearly observed that roughly an equal percentage of male and female students indicated that they intended to pursue higher education (Table 6.1). This is something that is confirmed by the official statistics of education (Department of Statistics and

Research, 2000), which clearly show that male and female students are equally represented in the tertiary level student population.

Gender	Intent to pursue higher studies			
	YES		NO	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<i>Male</i>	137	(78.3%)	38	(21.7%)
<i>Female</i>	183	(79.9%)	46	(20.1%)
TOTAL	320	(79.2%)	84	(20.8%)

Table 6.1: Intention to pursue higher education by gender

When the intention to pursue post secondary education in relation to social class (Table 6.2) is considered some very interesting patterns can be observed. Almost all students from professional middle class families and 84.5 per cent from lower middle class families intended to pursue some kind of higher education. But looking at students from working class families only two in three students are considering pursuing higher education. Of them, proportionally more working class female students are planning to pursue higher education than working class male students (69.5% and 60.6% respectively)

Social class	Intent to pursue higher studies			
	YES		NO	
<i>Professional middle class</i>	72 (98.6%)		1 (1.4%)	
	<i>Male</i> 33 (45.2%)	<i>Female</i> 39 (53.2%)	<i>Male</i> 0 (0%)	<i>Female</i> 1 (1.4%)
<i>Lower middle class</i>	131 (84.5%)		24 (15.5%)	
	<i>Male</i> 67 (43.2%)	<i>Female</i> 64 (41.3%)	<i>Male</i> 14 (9.0%)	<i>Female</i> 10 (6.5%)
<i>Working class</i>	117 (66.5%)		59 (33.5%)	
	<i>Male</i> 37 (22.0%)	<i>Female</i> 80 (44.5%)	<i>Male</i> 24 (13.6%)	<i>Female</i> 35 (19.9%)
TOTAL	320 (79.2%)		84 (20.8%)	

Table 6.2: Intention to pursue higher education by social class and gender

-The different kinds of secondary school education

It is widely believed that the kind of secondary education that the students attend has serious effects on the students' intention to pursue higher education. Some kinds of secondary education are characterised as academically oriented, in the sense that they provide students with those requirements that offer more effective access to higher education, whereas others are less academically oriented and less attractive to students who might wish to pursue higher education. Looking at Table 6.3 it can be seen that this is verified to a large extent. Almost all students who attended the academically oriented *S1 (Classics)* and *S2 (Science)* specialisations in the Lyceum and the students who attended private schools intended to pursue higher studies. A high percentage of those attending *S3 (Economics)* and *S5 (Foreign languages)* specialisations also intended to pursue higher studies. The students who attended *Technical* education and the *S4 (Commercial-Secretarial)* specialisation in the Lyceum, which are more vocationally oriented, expressed, to a lesser degree, intentions to pursue further and higher studies.

Kind of Secondary Education	Intent to pursue higher studies			
	YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%
<i>S1 (Classical)</i>	61	(96.8)	2	(3.2)
<i>S2 (Science)</i>	61	(100)	0	(0)
<i>S3 (Economics)</i>	54	(85.7)	9	(14.3)
<i>S4 (Commercial-Secretarial)</i>	26	(41.9)	36	(58.1)
<i>S5 (Foreign languages)</i>	28	(77.8)	8	(22.2)
<i>Technical</i>	36	(55.4)	29	(44.6)
<i>Private</i>	54	(100)	0	(0)
TOTAL	320	(79.2)	84	(20.8)

Table 6.3: Intention to pursue higher education by school/specialisation

It must be noted that there is a high percentage of students from specialisations that were initially designed to offer vocational training in order to prepare students for the labour market (vocationally oriented specialisations *S4*, *S5* and *Technical*) who appear to seek more education and vocational training. This indicates that there is a tendency to regard such qualifications from secondary schooling as not enough to secure employment in some areas. This is particularly true for the students who

attend Technical education where more than half indicated that they intended to pursue further education.

6.2.2 Intended field of study

The intended field of study at higher education clearly has major effects on the eventual occupational and thus social destinations of most individuals. Table 6.4 shows the area/field of study where the students indicated that they intended to pursue higher studies after secondary school. Some interesting gender patterns can be observed. Female students seem to be focusing in greater numbers on areas such as Education, Humanities, Social and Behavioural sciences, Fine Arts and Law. Male students seem to concentrate their interest in areas such as Economics, Engineering-Architecture, the Military schools and Mathematics-IT. These patterns could be characterised as stereotypical in the sense that they correspond to traditional images of what is a ‘suitable’ field of study for male or female students. This was an issue that was raised in a number of interviews with a sub-sample of parents and some interesting points were raised. These are presented in Section 7.4 where the whole issue of gender is examined. The issue of gender, however, should be examined in relation to social class because there are distinctive gender patterns in the different social classes.

Intended field of Study		N					
		Male		Female		Total	
1	Education	12	(6.6)	50	(21.8)	62	(15.3)
2	Humanities/Social &Behavioural sciences	10	(5.7)	54	(23.6)	64	(15.8)
3	Fine arts	8	(4.6)	18	(7.9)	26	(6.4)
4	Medicine	0	(0)	4	(1.8)	4	(1.0)
5	Paramedical (e.g. Nursing)	5	(2.9)	2	(0.9)	7	(1.7)
6	Law	1	(0.6)	15	(6.6)	16	(4.0)
7	Natural Sciences (e.g. Physics, Chemistry)	2	(1.2)	2	(0.9)	4	(1.0)
8	Mathematics – IT	16	(9.1)	2	(0.9)	18	(4.5)
9	Engineering- Architecture	13	(7.4)	1	(0.4)	14	(3.5)
10	Military	23	(13.1)	1	(0.4)	24	(5.9)
11	Economics	25	(14.3)	13	(5.7)	38	(9.4)
12	Secretarial studies-Tourism- Services	2	(1.2)	4	(1.8)	6	(1.5)
13	Trade/ Craft and Industrial programmes	19	(10.9)	9	(3.9)	28	(6.9)
14	Other	1	(0.6)	8	(3.5)	9	(2.2)
15	No plans for studies	38	(21.7)	46	(20.1)	84	(20.8)
TOTAL		175		229		404	100

* In parenthesis the percentages within gender

Table 6.4: Students’ first choice for future plans by gender

Social class background												
Intended field of study	Professional middle class			Lower middle class			Working class			TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot.	Male	Female	Tot
1. Education	3 (9.1)	4 (10.0)	7 (9.6)	7 (8.6)	19 (25.7)	26 (16.8)	2 (3.3)	27 (23.5)	29 (16.5)	12 (6.9)	50 (21.8)	62 (15.3)
2. Humanities/Social & Behavioural Scienc.	4 (12.1)	18 (45.0)	22 (30.1)	2 (2.5)	20 (27.0)	22 (14.2)	4 (6.6)	16 (13.9)	20 (11.4)	10 (5.7)	54 (23.6)	64 (15.8)
3. Fine arts	3 (9.1)	3 (7.5)	6 (8.2)	3 (3.7)	9 (12.2)	12 (7.7)	2 (3.3)	6 (5.2)	8 (4.5)	8 (4.6)	18 (7.9)	26 (6.4)
4. Medicine	0 (0)	1 (2.5)	1 (1.4)	0 (0)	2 (2.7)	2 (1.3)	0 (0)	1 (0.9)	1 (0.6)	0 (0)	4 (1.7)	4 (1.0)
5. Paramedical	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1.2)	0 (0)	1 (0.6)	4 (6.6)	2 (1.7)	6 (3.4)	5 (2.9)	2 (0.9)	7 (1.7)
6. Law	1 (3.0)	9 (22.5)	10 (13.7)	0 (0)	3 (4.1)	3 (1.9)	0 (0)	3 (2.6)	3 (1.7)	1 (0.6)	15 (6.6)	16 (4.0)
7. Natural sciences	2 (6.1)	1 (2.5)	3 (4.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0.9)	1 (0.6)	2 (1.1)	2 (0.9)	4 (1.0)
8. Mathematics/IT	5 (15.2)	0 (0)	5 (6.8)	9 (11.1)	1 (0.9)	10 (6.5)	2 (3.3)	1 (0.9)	3 (1.7)	16 (9.1)	2 (0.9)	18 (4.5)
9. Engineer./Architect.	0 (0)	1 (2.5)	1 (1.4)	10 (12.3)	0 (0)	10 (6.5)	3 (4.9)	0 (0)	3 (1.7)	13 (7.4)	1 (0.4)	14 (3.5)
10. Military	2 (6.1)	0 (0)	2 (2.7)	14 (17.3)	1 (0.9)	15 (9.7)	7 (11.3)	0 (0)	7 (4.0)	23 (13.1)	1 (0.4)	24 (5.9)
11. Economics	10 (30.3)	2 (5.0)	12 (16.4)	11 (13.6)	5 (6.8)	16 (10.3)	4 (6.6)	6 (5.2)	10 (5.7)	25 (14.3)	13 (5.7)	38 (9.4)
12. Secretarial studies-tourism- services	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2.5)	2 (2.7)	4 (2.6)	0 (0)	2 (1.7)	2 (1.1)	2 (1.1)	4 (1.7)	6 (1.5)
13. Trade/craft and Industrial programmes	2 (6.1)	0 (0)	2 (2.7)	8 (9.9)	2 (2.7)	10 (6.5)	9 (14.8)	7 (6.1)	16 (9.1)	19 (10.9)	9 (3.9)	28 (6.9)
14. Other	1 (3.0)	0 (0)	1 (1.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (7.0)	8 (4.5)	1 (0.6)	8 (3.5)	9 (2.2)
15. No plans for studies	0 (0)	1 (2.5)	1 (1.4)	14 (17.3)	10 (13.5)	24 (15.5)	24 (39.3)	35 (30.4)	59 (33.5)	38 (21.7)	46 (20.1)	84 (20.8)
TOTAL	33 (100)	40 (100)	73 (100)	81 (100)	74 (100)	155 (100)	61 (100)	115 (100)	176 (100)	175 (100)	229 (100)	404 (100)

Note: The numbers in parenthesis are the percentages within social class group.

Table 6.5: Students' first choice for future plans after secondary school by gender and social class

Looking at Table 6.5 interesting observations in relation to gender and social class background may be made. Male students from professional middle class families tend to prefer, in greater numbers studies, in the area of Economics and Business

studies. Male students from lower middle class families tend to favour military schools, Engineering and Economics, whereas a significant proportion (17.3 %) did not have any plans for further studies. An even larger proportion of male working class students had no intention of pursuing further studies (almost 40%). Of those who intended to pursue further education 14.8% intended to pursue studies in trade, craft and industrial programmes. As for the female students, those coming from professional middle class families preferred studies in the area of Humanities and Social Studies (45.0 %) with Law coming second in their choices (22.5 %). Female students from lower middle class families intended to pursue equally Humanities/ Social Studies and Education (27.0 % and 25.7%). Working class female students' preferred field of study was education, whereas it must be noted that one in every three students did not intend to take their education further.

6.2.3 Country where students intend to pursue their studies

The place where students pursue their higher studies may have serious implications for the eventual occupational and thus social position in which an individual may end up. This was an issue that was discussed in Chapter 4, where it was argued that British qualifications, for example, tend to be more favourably accepted in the Cypriot labour market.

Nearly 80 per cent of the students ($N=320$) indicated that they would pursue some kind of higher education. Students indicated the place where they thought they would most likely pursue their higher studies. Their answers are shown on Table 6.6. The students' answers are presented in relation to their social class background because, as was pointed out before, there are significant implications for an individual's occupational prospects coming from the place from where that individual may get his/her qualifications.

As shown in Table 6.6 the majority of students indicated that they intended to pursue their further studies in Greece (48.1%). It appears that Greece is the most favourable destination for students coming from lower middle and working class families (51.9% and 54.7% respectively). This destination may be characterised as a 'pragmatic' rather than a 'preferred' option for these students because when they were

asked to indicate where they wished to do their studies if they had the opportunity the above percentages drop around 40% to 32.0% and 34.2% respectively.

Nearly a quarter of the students indicated that they intended to pursue their studies in Cyprus. Again, Cyprus appears to be a preferred option for students coming from lower middle and working class families (24.4% and 25.6% respectively) and these proportions increase when students indicated the place where they wished to study.

Place of study			Professional middle class		Lower middle class		Working class		TOTAL	
			<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
1.	Cyprus	Expect	12	(16.7)	32	(24.4)	30	(25.6)	74	(23.1)
		Wished	9	(12.5)	44	(34.4)	46	(36.3)	99	(30.9)
2.	Greece	Expect	22	(30.6)	68	(51.9)	64	(54.7)	154	(48.1)
		Wished	21	(29.2)	41	(32.0)	41	(34.2)	103	(32.2)
3.	Britain	Expect	25	(34.7)	14	(10.7)	4	(3.4)	43	(13.4)
		Wished	23	(31.9)	21	(16.4)	6	(5.0)	50	(15.6)
4.	USA	Expect	7	(9.7)	5	(3.8)	3	(2.6)	15	(4.7)
		Wished	13	(18.1)	8	(6.3)	9	(7.5)	30	(9.4)
5.	College *	Expect	3	(4.2)	4	(3.1)	10	(8.5)	17	(5.3)
		Wished	1	(1.4)	5	(3.9)	11	(9.2)	17	(5.3)
6.	Other	Expect	3	(4.2)	8	(6.1)	6	(5.1)	17	(5.3)
		Wished	5	(6.9)	9	(7.0)	7	(5.8)	21	(6.6)
TOTAL			72	(100)	131	(100)	117	(100)	320	(100)
			72	(100)	128	(100)	120	(100)	320	(100)

*First in a college in Cyprus and then abroad

Table 6.6: Place where students indicated that they **expected** would most likely pursue their future studies and where they **wished** to study if they had the opportunity

It is interesting to note the intentions of students coming from the professional middle class families. The majority of these students (34.7%) intended to pursue their studies in Britain and another significant proportion in Greece (30.6%). The fact that nearly a third of these students point to Britain as the destination where they would most likely have their studies with another 9.7% the USA, should be seen in relation to the significance and the value that English-speaking qualifications have in the Cypriot labour market. Such qualifications in the hands of any graduate will undoubtedly provide a strong advantage for their future social positions. The

comments of some parents are indicative of this fact. (See parents’ comments in Chapter 7 where they claim that British education is valued more by the labour market in relation to other kinds of education.)

A one-time favourite destination (during the late 60s, 70s and 80s) for a group of students to pursue higher education, Eastern Europe, does not appear to be an option for the students in the present sample. This has been the result of the collapse of the socialist regimes of these countries, which during the 60s, 70s and 80s offered an alternative (or one may say the only) route for higher studies to a number of children mostly from lower social class, leftist families. This was achieved though offering scholarships to these students.

It has to be said that the percentages of the preferred places for studies do not change the picture of the places where students indicated that they realistically expected to pursue their studies. However, there are interesting observations that are worth mentioning when looking at the reasons students cited when they were asked, in a open-ended question, to indicate the reason(s) for choosing a different country where they would have liked to pursue their studies if they had the opportunity. In total the students provided 70 answers, which were grouped as follows:

Reason	PMC	LMC	WC	TOTAL
1. Financial reasons ¹	0	9	10	19
2. I would like to stay in Cyprus to be close to my family	1	4	5	10
3. Better education	2	6	5	13
4. English speaking university education is better	3	3	1	7
5. Cyprus University entrance examinations are hard	1	0	5	6
6. Cyprus University is better	1	1	0	2
7. Other	0	8	5	13
TOTAL	8	31	31	70

Table 6.7: Reasons the students cited for preferring a destination other than the one where they realistically expected to have their studies

From the reasons the students cited it can be seen that more lower-middle and working class students pointed to financial reasons for making a different choice from the one they might have done if they had the financial capability. Also, it

appears that they are less 'excited' about leaving the home environment to go and study abroad. Moreover they seem to be indicating that another serious reason for 'wishing' to have been able to study elsewhere (rather than the place they indicated that they realistically expected to study) is because they believe that they would get a better education. In other words they seem to be indicating that they acknowledge that there are better opportunities out there than the place where they realistically expected to carry out their studies.

6.3 The occupational aspirations of students graduating from secondary education

Among the questions that students were asked to respond to in the questionnaire, one asked them to indicate the job they expected that they would most likely do. The students' answers were grouped in the categories shown in column one in Table 6.8. The findings are presented for male and female students as well as social class background. As Table 6.8 indicates, there are clear social class and gender patterns in the occupational aspirations of students graduating from secondary education. These observations could be summed up as follows:

- a) Nearly 40 per cent of students coming from professional middle class families aspired to enter professional jobs. Roughly equal numbers of male and female students aspire to do such jobs. Another 16.4 percent aspired to follow a teaching career (primary and secondary) and another 11 percent intermediate/ sub-professional or technical jobs. Virtually none aspired to enter manual or clerical/secretarial jobs. It appears that a large proportion (20 percent) of students from professional middle class families are not sure about the kind of job they would eventually do. Of them, female students appear to be more uncertain. If we compare the numbers of students who appear to be undecided about the job that they would eventually do we see that the higher the social class background of the student the more undecided they are. This may indicate a level of security *PMC* students have

¹ Among the students indicating this answer were 7 students who pointed out that if the costs were affordable they would have liked to attend British or American Universities.

in making late decisions, something that may not be so convenient for lower class students who may be 'forced' to make early decisions about occupational destinations.

- b) Of the students coming from lower middle class families 21.3 percent aspired to enter professional jobs. It is interesting to note that 27.1 percent aspire to a teaching career. There is a gender pattern here, with almost 40 percent of female lower middle class students expecting to do a teaching job. Lower middle class boys appear to favour entering an intermediate/ sub-professional or technical job (27.2 percent). None of the *LMC* students aspired to enter a manual job whereas one in ten appear to aspire to a clerical/secretarial job.
- c) Nearly half of the students coming from working class backgrounds aspired to enter intermediate/ sub-professional, technical or clerical/ secretarial jobs. There is an interesting gender observation that can be made about this group of students: Most male working class students (60.7 percent) aspired to reach intermediate / sub-professional or technical jobs whereas nearly half the female working class students aspired to enter intermediate / sub-professional / technical jobs or clerical / secretarial jobs. The working class students who appear to be unsure of the kind of job they would do is 10.2 percent, which is lower than the two other groups, and a possible explanation may be the one cited above.

The above observations signify clear social class patterns that have implications for issues of social reproduction. It appears that at the level of choice making there is clear evidence to indicate that social reproduction appears. This finding, even though important, on its own does not constitute a groundbreaking finding. What is interesting and challenging to investigate is the underlying mechanisms by which these choices take place. These interesting issues are investigated in the next two chapters. Before moving in that direction one issue that needs to be presented is the sector in which the students aspired to be employed. This is examined in view of the fact that public and semi-public sectors offer relative security and stability and many positions in these sectors are widely considered to be prestigious.

Job I expect that I would most likely do	Professional middle class			Lower middle class			Working class		
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>T</i>
1. Traditional professional job	11 (33.3)	14 (35.0)	25 (34.2)	17 (21.0)	16 (21.6)	33 (21.3)	7 (11.5)	10 (8.7)	17 (9.7)
2. 'New' professional job	2 (6.1)	2 (5.0)	4 (5.5)	3 (3.7)	0 (0)	3 (1.9)	3 (4.9)	3 (2.6)	6 (3.4)
3. Nursery/Primary teaching	3 (9.1)	2 (5.0)	5 (6.8)	0 (0)	12 (16.2)	12 (7.7)	0 (0)	14 (12.2)	14 (8.0)
4. Secondary teaching	1 (3.0)	6 (15.0)	7 (9.6)	13 (16.0)	17 (23.0)	30 (19.4)	3 (4.9)	9 (7.8)	12 (6.8)
5. Art	3 (9.1)	3 (7.5)	6 (8.2)	1 (1.2)	5 (6.8)	6 (3.9)	0 (0)	2 (1.7)	2 (1.1)
6. Intermediate / sub professional / technical job	5 (15.2)	3 (7.5)	8 (11.0)	22 (27.2)	9 (12.2)	31 (20.0)	37 (60.7)	29 (25.2)	66 (37.5)
7. Clerical/Secretarial job	1 (3.0)	0 (0)	1 (1.4)	9 (11.1)	7 (9.5)	16 (10.3)	1 (1.6)	27 (23.5)	28 (15.9)
8. Manual job	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (6.6)	6 (5.2)	10 (5.7)
9. Unclassified	3 (9.1)	0 (0)	3 (4.1)	4 (4.1)	1 (1.4)	5 (3.2)	1 (1.6)	2 (1.7)	3 (1.7)
10. Not sure yet/Don't know	4 (12.1)	10 (25.0)	14 (19.2)	12 (14.8)	7 (9.5)	19 (12.3)	5 (8.2)	13 (11.3)	18 (10.2)
TOTAL	33 (100)	40 (100)	73 (100)	81 (100)	74 (100)	155 (100)	61 (100)	115 (100)	176 (100)

Note1: The numbers in parenthesis show the percentage within each social class group.

Note2: Traditional professional jobs were jobs such as doctor, lawyer, architect, engineer, accountant, etc. 'New' professional jobs were those jobs relating to modern technologies. Intermediate/ sub-professional/ technical jobs included nursing, policing, trained technicians, etc.

Table 6.8: Occupational aspirations of students

6.3.1 Sector where students expect to be employed

Students were asked to indicate the sector they thought they would most likely end up working in. Their answers point to the fact that proportionally more lower-middle class students aspire to work in the public or semi-public sector whereas a large proportion of working class students also appear to aspire to do the same (Table 6.9).

	Professional middle class	Lower middle class	Working class	TOTAL
Private sector	43 58.9	69 44.5	105 59.7	217 53.7
Public Semi-public sector	16 21.9	72 46.5	60 34.1	148 36.6
Not sure Not answered	14 19.2	14 9.0	11 6.2	39 9.7
TOTAL	73 100	155 100	176 100	404 100

Table 6.9: Sector expected to be employed by social class

An interesting finding is shown on Table 6.10 where students' answers are presented in terms of gender. Proportionally, more male than female students aspire to work within the 'security' that public and semi-public sectors offer. The above should be viewed in relation to the comments made earlier (in Section 6.2.2) about the perceived notion that men have primary responsibility for supporting a future family and thus they should pursue secure paths of employment. This is examined in more detail in the next chapter.

	Male	Female	TOTAL
Private sector	89 50.9	128 55.9	217 53.7
Public Semi-public sector	72 41.1	76 33.2	148 36.6
Not sure Not answered	14 8.0	25 10.9	39 9.7
TOTAL	175 100	229 100	404 100

Table 6.10: Sector expected to be employed by gender

6.4 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the analysis of the educational and occupational aspirations of students who were graduating from secondary education. It indicated that there is a distinct social class pattern in the intention to pursue further education. There are also clear gender and social class patterns in the kind of

higher education students aspire to follow and on the occupational aspirations of students. These findings point to the need to move into investigating the mechanisms that lay behind the way these choices are made. This examination focuses on the Greek Cypriot family and the dynamics that are produced as a result of the resources (particularly those with non-monetary nature) that it makes available for its younger members. Parents attitudes towards processes of social advancement and gender issues are considered to be paramount in the way resources become available to students graduating from secondary education.

Chapter 7:

Cultural capital as a source of support for educational processes

7.1 Introduction

This chapter, and the subsequent chapter, explores the findings regarding the patterns observed in choice making. It examines the role of cultural capital of different families located in various social class positions in influencing the educational and occupational prospects of their younger members. The above are examined in relation to the schooling experiences of secondary school students. The family as a source for providing support for educational processes and choice making are also examined by investigating parents' attitudes towards social advancement, parental involvement in students' education. Finally, this chapter discusses parents' expectations for their sons and daughters and examines how 'liberal' or 'conservative' attitudes in relation to gender issues may influence the life prospects of young people.

7.2 Cultural capital and the Greek Cypriot family

As was discussed in Chapter 2, family capital may include a variety of things and entities and can influence, in various ways, children's educational and future occupational prospects. Financial capital is at the top of the resources that produce effective advantages and positively influence the prospects of the children, but as was stated on a number of occasions this study focuses on two non-monetary forms of family capital, namely cultural and social, which in conjunction with economic capital offer advantages to secondary school students' prospects.

The presence of cultural capital in the home and the way it may potentially influence the educational and occupational prospects of the children is investigated in two ways:

a) First, student cultural capital is investigated by examining three different indicators i. Attendance at five different cultural activities by the students during the previous year (concerts, theatre, lectures, visits to museums and galleries), ii. the availability of several educational/cultural objects in the home (computer, Internet access, library, encyclopaedia, artworks) iii. the literature reading environment in the house measured by the number of literature books that the students read other than those required by the school. These three indicators were to be investigated later on to see whether they had any effect on students' academic achievement and level of educational aspiration.

b) In another aspect the presence of cultural capital among homes of different social class is examined by looking at a sub-sample of parents coming from different social class backgrounds. Parents' cultural capital is examined in a more educationally specific manner. More precisely, it is investigated as consisting of parents' knowledge about how to successfully engage with educational processes in an effort to secure the best possible educational and other opportunities for their children.

7.2.1 Cultural capital and students

The first thing to be examined in relation to students' cultural capital was whether the consumption of culture in the form of participation in different cultural activities was different for students coming from different social class backgrounds. Also, whether there were noticeable differences in the reading habits of students from different social class backgrounds and the presence of different educational/cultural objects at their homes. Table 7.1 presents the above for the upper-middle/ middle class, lower middle class and working class students.

Table 7.1 clearly shows that there are distinctive differences in the measures of cultural capital of students from different social class backgrounds. It can be seen that on average, students from professional middle class families read more, attend more cultural events and have more educational/cultural objects at home. More specifically, it can be seen that in the previous twelve months, students from professional/ middle class families, on average, read three literature books, attended at least three different kinds of cultural events and had more than three

cultural/educational objects (of the ones specified in the present study) at home. The above are very different for students from working class families. They appear to read fewer books, attend fewer cultural events and own fewer educational/cultural items than students from higher social class backgrounds. Whether these differences translate into any real advantages or disadvantages in terms of influencing (positively or negatively) the education of students, namely their academic performance or educational aspirations, is something that is explored in Sections 7.3.2 and 7.3.3 using statistical analysis.

	Professional/ middle class (N=73)	Intermediate Lower middle class (N=155)	Working class (N=176)
Literature	2.93 (2.07)	1.66 (2.03)	0.95 (1.57)
Cultural activities	2.79 (1.60)	1.83 (1.51)	1.41 (1.40)
Cultural/Educational objects	3.41 (1.38)	2.34 (1.49)	1.56 (1.37)

Table 7.1: Means and SD (in parenthesis) for the measures of Literature, Cultural activities and Cultural/Educational objects for students coming from professional/ middle, lower middle and working class students.

7.2.2 An insight into parental cultural capital

The presence of cultural capital in the home in the form of parents’ knowledge and ability to engage successfully with the educational processes for maximising the opportunities of their children is investigated through looking into the parents interview responses.

PMC parents

All the parents in this group were graduates of British and Greek Universities and two of them also held postgraduate degrees (Cases 6 and 8). All the parents in this group seemed to have enough knowledge of the educational processes in Cyprus and their views were very clear as to how they saw the general state of education in Cyprus. They were very critical of certain aspects of the educational system and on some occasions, some expressed views about possible measures to improve the things that they saw as being problematic. Their knowledge of the current state of educational affairs in Cyprus, the prospects and the opportunities on offer for their

children is something that may have positive effects in influencing the making of better informed choices for their children's futures. Also, it has to be noted that this group of parents were in a position to back their decisions and materialise them financially. The parents from this group can be divided in two sub-groups: a) those who sent their children to private schools (Cases 1,2 and 3) and b) those who sent their children to public Lyceums (Cases 4,5,6,7,8).

The first group of parents sent their children to private English-speaking schools because they considered English-speaking education and English-speaking schools to be better than public schools. Mr Dimou (*PMC 1*) commented on her son's private schooling:

The advantage that I saw in our case was that in the 7 years he has been there [*at his private school*] he always has been among the first 7-8 of his class and we were never had any worries to send him in *frontisteria* in the afternoons in any lesson. That is a great advantage. Also the way they work with their different Societies it helps them to socialise and to develop as individuals ...

Mr Dimou (*PMC 1*)

Mr and Mrs Yiorgiou (*PMC 2*) saw their decision to send their daughter to a private school as a choice that eventually proved to be right.

Personally I wouldn't mind if she attended a public school. But I do not regret our choice. Because from what I hear from secondary school teachers and friends up until Christmas they [*in public schools*] still change classes, teachers move there is *disorder* [*ataxia*] whereas at English school we get the programme from June for the following year and the first day in September is a full working day. Very organised. And some reservations I had about the language in the end I did not regret it at all.

Mr Yiorgiou (*PMC 2*)

... they try to develop their personalities with the clubs they have after school etc it is not just the lessons ...

Mrs Yiorgiou (*PMC 2*)

... and the labour market values more the English speaking education.

Mr Yiorgiou (*PMC 2*)

Mr Paris (*PMC 3*) held strong views about the benefits that English-speaking education offers to students and appeared to appreciate the value the labour market offers to graduates of these schools.

Basically I believed that English should be a second mother tongue and you can achieve that only by attending an English school rather than by attending afternoon classes (*frontestiria*) or by going to England two or three years later. This was my reasoning for sending my son to private English school and indeed today his English are better than his Greek... I believe that our secondary schools are still good but there is a different

approach in the private English schools. There is a better culture, better behaviour from the teachers towards the students, better discipline in these schools, which affect the development of the character of the students.

Mr Paris (*PMC 3*)

Mr Konstantinou (Case 4), even though he sent his daughter to a public Lyceum, also considered English speaking secondary education to be better than that offered by public schools. Initially he wanted his daughter to attend private school but because of a law that would not allow students from these schools to attend Greek Universities and the University of Cyprus, he decided to send his daughter to a public school so that she could keep her options open¹.

The parents who sent their children to private schools did so because they considered the value that the labour market in Cyprus attaches to English-speaking education was greater² than the one it attaches to Greek-speaking education. Mrs Dimou (*PMC 1*), Mr Paris (*PMC 3*) and Mr Konstantinou (*PMC 4*) were themselves graduates of these schools and they seem to attribute part of their current position to the fact that they attended such schools. Their choice of private education for their children shows an understanding of advantages that they regard English-speaking education offers. Among other advantages they seem to suggest that English-speaking schools: a) train students adequately for entrance examinations for English speaking universities, b) they appear to be offering a fuller education in the sense that they do not require students to attend extra lessons (*frontestiria*), something that cannot be said about public secondary schools, c) they appear to be more organised and more disciplined and d) they organise extra curriculum activities clubs, societies etc. something that the parents considered as contributing to their children's fuller individual and social development.

On the other hand, the parents in the *PMC* group whose children attend public Lyceums seem to acknowledge the faults of the educational system among which is primarily the fact that they do not seem to prepare children for examinations adequately. But not all see private schools as the solution. Some of them hold some

¹ But because of his views on the matter when this law was abolished he sent his younger daughter to a private school.

² Demetriades (1988) has shown that this notion is a valid one. He demonstrated that professionals with English-speaking education tend to earn more than professionals with other (i.e. Greek-speaking) education.

strong views about these schools. In particular, Mr Loizou who expressed his views about these schools as follows

... for me they [private English speaking schools] are a continuation of the occupation of Hellenism. It is a leftover from Colonialism. If I had the power I would abolish these schools. There you have people ...the government has no say in the appointment of teachers or in the curriculum. They do not teach Greek sufficiently. I believe it is a leftover from the Colonial era and I am against it. And let me tell you one more thing. Most senior civil servants Directors of Departments [in government] are graduates of these schools. They know each other they form societies etc and one helps the other ...

Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*)

These parents saw drawbacks in public schools. They described issues that had to do with inadequate organisation and administration in public schools to the fact that many of the teachers that are appointed do not seem to be properly selected or adequately trained for the job that they are supposed to do.

Somebody graduates from a university and he is appointed as a secondary school teacher without being trained and examined to see whether he is capable of becoming a teacher. He is there because he graduated from a university one-way or the other. And you can see tragic situations. You see a person of 45 being appointed as a secondary school teacher who, in the meantime, has done a number of jobs. Has he got any desire to teach properly? No. So it is a failure of the personnel and not so much of the educational system. The system as it is, the LEM let's say, is right, to focus on some basic lessons and not on unnecessary things like we used to do but there is a problem in the selection of the personnel. If you happen to have X in Mathematics you will learn Maths if not ...

Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*)

On the issue of *frontisteria* Mr Kosta had this to say.

This situation of *frontisteria* for me is an essential evil. There are few places in the university so the competition is very high. It is a weakness of the educational system in two ways. Because nowadays all students want to graduate and in a class you find good, average and weak students and the teacher can not ... has to go with the rhythm of the less bright students. ... and also ... the teachers. First of all as people they are not all equally good and then whoever gets a university degree can be appointed as secondary school teacher even if they graduated 10 years ago...

Mr Kosta (*PMC 8*)

Having these views about the public schools they seem to be able to overcome what they viewed as inadequacies by actively enrolling their children in *frontisteria* with the exclusive aim of helping their children prepare for the national entrance examinations for the Greek Universities and the University of Cyprus.

LMC parents

Most of the parents interviewed from the LMC group were graduates of secondary education. Two of them attended college (*LMC 9* and *11*) but only one graduated (*LMC 9*). During the interviews they all showed themselves to be adequately informed about educational processes in Cyprus and thus appeared to as informed as the first group about the prospects and possibilities of future choices. One distinctive element from the first group is that they did not appear to be as judgmental of the educational system as the parents from the first group. They acknowledged the drawbacks of the system and they too tried to overcome the inadequacies of the public secondary school by sending their children to *frontisteria*. Of these parents Mr Athou (*LMC 11*) sent his son to private education and his reasoning was similar to parents from the *PMC* group.

I believed and I still believe that English-speaking education at the English school ... the way they do it ... it is more useful when a student graduates secondary school. The English language, the GCEs .. and their ways ... their discipline ... and all these things ...

Mr Athou (*LMC 11*)

It has to be noted though, that some parents were better informed about educational processes than others. Mr Nikolaou (*LMC 9*), Mrs Andreou (*LMC 10*), Mr Athou (*LMC 11*), Mrs Michael (*LMC 14*) and Mr Daniel (*LMC 15*) were very well informed of the educational realities of Cyprus and the educational prospects that lay ahead for their children. They all regarded *frontisteria* as a solution to the problems that the education of public schools particularly on the issue that they did not prepare students adequately for the university entrance examinations.

Others like Mr Kostaki (*LMC 12*) and Mr Christodoulou (*LMC 16*) appeared not to be so well informed. Mr Kostaki, for example, admitted that they had made mistakes in the choice of specialisation for his daughter and attributed these mistakes to the fact that they were misinformed about the prospects that each specialisation offered.

Looking back to the choices we made [regarding his daughter specialisation] ... they were wrong. As I told you earlier one of the reasons was the fact that we were *misinformed*. It might have been better if she followed Classics [instead of Economics].

Mr Kostaki (*LMC 12*)

WC parents

Some parents from the third group appeared not to be very well informed about the educational processes and their children's prospects. This can partly be attributed to the fact that half of them did not graduate from secondary school whereas two of them received vocational training in Technical schools. It is noteworthy that many of them appear to get their information about the educational matters that affected their children from their own children in contrast to the parents from the other two groups who appeared to have multiple sources of information about educational matters among which were teacher friends and acquaintances, other parents, the media, they were following the current debates that were being held on educational matters in the public domain etc. One parent, though, was a notable exception. Mrs Litsa appeared not only very well informed about educational processes but also critical of the educational reality of her daughter's schooling.

It is a very bad thing [talking about *frontisteria*] for the students and for the parents too. Because all her afternoons are spent in the *frontisteria*. My older daughter is attending all the lessons that she is going to take in examinations and the youngest one, when she saw that all her classmates were attending *frontisteria*, she came and told me that she had to go too, because she would stay behind if she didn't. And when you have two children. Take one get the other, it is a torture [*martyrio*]. You cannot do your job properly. And that's the Ministry's fault. Because the lessons are so hard and too much ... to give you an example they did not manage to finish the Physics curriculum this year. And they will have this lesson in the exams. If they were to do it very quickly nobody would follow or you would need *frontisteria*. It is not so much the teacher's fault but the Ministry's fault that gives so much material to be taught. This way we the parents are in agony, the children too and we pay too much money in the *frontisteria* to do the schools work. What can we do? I pay £360 for my children's *frontisteria* each month. She cannot not go because she will stay behind. It is not for the school grades so much but it is for the entrance examinations.

Mrs Litsa (WC 21)

In most cases, however, parents did not appear to be as informed or critical of educational processes as the other two groups of parents particularly the *PMC*. It was very characteristic of the respondents that on some occasions parents asked me (the interviewer) to verify and confirm something they have heard, as in the case (WC 17) of a mother who asked if there were ways to get help so that her daughter could be given a chance to attend higher education³. Another case which demonstrated

³ At a point that mother asked me if I could help them in any way. The following is an extract from my field notes. 'At the end of the interview and as I got up to leave the mother asked me: "Could you help us in any way?" i.e. for her daughter to gain access to some kind of higher education. This question brought me in an immensely difficult situation. After I had explained to the mother my intentions and

‘ignorance’ of the prospects that different specialisation offer was case WC 18, where a mother was complaining that her son decided to attend a very demanding specialisation in Lyceum, even though academically he was not a very ‘bright’ student only to find himself in the end struggling to get his *Apolytirio* (leaving certificate) something that was seriously compromising his prospects for future academic or occupational pursuits.

Other parents, (WC 23,24), even though they appeared not to be so well informed about the educational matters relating to their children’s education, seemed to be supportive of their children’s decisions but, again, appeared to be relying on their children for information about the various prospects and possibilities. One parent appeared to be intimidated by the educational settings (WC 19) and another completely disengaged from things to do with educational processes in general (WC 22). Here are some extracts from the interviews. Talking about the kind of *frontisteria* his child attended Mr Michalis (WC 22) said

‘... I think Accountancy. He had difficulties ... and English ... It was totally his decisions. He came and told me and I said yes. What else could I do?’

Mr Michalis (WC 22)

On the same issue Mr Agapiou (WC 19) said:

‘To tell you the truth it was something that was decided by my daughter [the selection of *frontisteria*]. She knew what was essential for her.’

Mr Agapiou (WC 19)

And on the issue of selecting a specialisation in Lyceum

‘I don’t know much about these things. I did not graduate from secondary school. She knew better.’

Mr Agapiou (WC 19)

Summing up, what can be said about the parents interviewed from the three groups is that most *PMC* and *LMC* parents appear to be well informed about educational processes and know the prospects that lay ahead for their children. On the other hand the majority of *WC* class parents appear to be less informed about the educational

the purpose of my research over the phone and after talking to that mother who expressed her agonies and thoughts about her child, she still saw me as a person she thought (or probably hoped) was in a position to offer a way out for them when, in fact, all I wanted was to do an interview which in reality had no immediate benefit to them. I had to explain **again** to that mother that unfortunately I could not offer any real practical help. The help that would ultimately come from my research would be a long-term one as it might contribute in challenging and ultimately changing the conditions that did not allow some parents and their children to be given equal opportunities to make choices for the children’s future prospects.’

prospects of their children and they appeared to rely on their children for information and trust their children's judgement on issues relating to children's education.

7.3 Students and their secondary schooling

This section moves on to present the students in relation to their secondary schooling. There are some interesting observations that can be made about students' secondary schooling as this has very important effects on the way that they make their choices for their post secondary school destinations. The kind of secondary schooling that students attend, for example, (be it public, technical or private) the students' academic performance, the kind of *frontisteria* they attend, clearly have implications for the choices that they make for their future. In fact the kind of secondary schooling they attend shapes, to a significant extent, the different prospects that are created for potential choices to be made as students who have attended three years of technical education for example would realistically find it difficult to consider following theoretical social studies at a higher level.

First of all it must be noted that there are clear gender patterns in the kind of secondary education students attend. These are clearly demonstrated in the *Statistics of Education* (1999) and can be seen reflected in the sample of this study. As the *Statistics of Education* (1999) clearly shows there are some kinds of secondary education that are distinctly female dominated and others that are male dominated. More specifically, female students tend to dominate specialisations such as S1 (*Classics*) and S5 (*Foreign languages*) whereas male students tend to dominate specialisations such as S2 (*Sciences*) and Technical Education. As for the other specialisations, relatively more female students than male students attend S3 (*Economics*) and S4 (*Commercial-Secretarial*) whereas roughly equal numbers of male and female students attend Private education. (See Appendix 6.1, Figure a.) In our sample this picture is reflected as can be seen in the following table (Table 7.2).

Specialization	Male <i>N</i>	Female <i>N</i>
S1 Classics	11	52
<i>% within specialization</i>	(17.4)	(82.6)
<i>% within gender</i>	(6.3)	(22.7)
S2 Science	41	20
<i>% within specialization</i>	(67.2)	(32.8)
<i>% within gender</i>	(23.4)	(8.7)
S3 Economics	23	40
<i>% within specialization</i>	(36.5)	(63.5)
<i>% within gender</i>	(13.1)	(17.5)
S4 Secretarial	24	38
<i>% within specialization</i>	(40.0)	(60.0)
<i>% within gender</i>	(13.7)	(16.6)
S5 Foreign language	0	36
<i>% within specialization</i>	(0)	(100)
<i>% within gender</i>	(0)	(15.7)
Technical	51	14
<i>% within specialization</i>	(78.5)	(21.5)
<i>% within gender</i>	(29.1)	(6.1)
Private	25	29
<i>% within specialization</i>	(46.3)	(53.7)
<i>% within gender</i>	(14.3)	(12.7)
TOTAL	175	229
<i>% within gender</i>	(46.3)	(56.7)

Table 7.2: Gender composition of the different specialisations in the sample

Next, the relationship between the social class origins of the student in the sample is examined and the different kinds of specialisations they follow. This is a relationship that has never been examined by the official statistics published by the Department of Statistics which makes this investigation particularly interesting. This examination aims to uncover whether different social classes tend to favour some kinds of secondary education over others which, in turn, would offer an indication as to the possible prospects that lay ahead for students coming from different social class backgrounds.

7.3.1 The social class profile of the different kinds of secondary education

<i>Social class background</i>	<i>Specialisation</i>							TOTAL
	<i>S1</i> <i>Classics</i>	<i>S2</i> <i>Science</i>	<i>S3</i> <i>Econom.</i>	<i>S4</i> <i>Secreter.</i>	<i>S5</i> <i>For. Lang.</i>	<i>Tech.</i>	<i>Priv.</i>	
<i>PMC Student</i>	18	12	6	3	0	3	31	73
<i>% within social class</i>	24.7	16.4	8.2	4.1	0	4.1	42.5	
<i>% within specialisation</i>	28.6	19.7	9.5	4.8	0	4.6	57.4	
<i>LMC Student</i>	19	30	32	16	15	23	20	155
<i>% within social class</i>	12.3	19.4	20.6	10.3	9.7	14.8	12.9	
<i>% within specialisation</i>	30.2	49.2	50.8	25.8	41.7	35.4	37.0	
<i>WC Student</i>	26	19	25	43	21	39	3	176
<i>% within social class</i>	14.8	10.8	14.2	24.4	11.9	22.2	1.7	
<i>% within specialisation</i>	41.3	31.1	39.7	69.4	58.3	60.0	5.6	
TOTAL	63	61	63	62	36	65	54	404

Table 7.3: The social class background of students in the different kinds of secondary education

The social class composition of the different kinds of secondary education portrays some very interesting observations. The data in Table 7.4 indicate the following:

- a) The intake of private schools in Cyprus is mainly from the professional middle class and to a lesser degree from lower middle class. Other options for professional middle class students in the public Lyceum are the Classics and Science specialisations, which are chiefly academically oriented.

- b) Students who follow Technical education come mostly from working class backgrounds and, to a lesser degree, from lower middle class backgrounds. Similarly the Secretarial specialisation, which is largely vocationally oriented, is mostly attended by working class students and to a lesser degree from lower middle class students.

- c) Lower middle class students tend to follow mostly the Science and Economics specialisations in the public Lyceum. They also follow all the other kinds of secondary education as well, academically or vocationally oriented.

7.3.2 Factors influencing students' academic performance

The academic performance of students in their secondary schooling plays an important role in shaping the future educational outcomes of students. Because most of the routes that the students eventually pursue are related to their academic performance either in university entrance examinations or in academic performance in external examinations such as GCEs or TOEFL and SATs, it was important to investigate the effect of different factors on students' performance in secondary school. More precisely it was interesting to investigate whether the academic performance of students was class related and whether student cultural capital (as was specified in this study) was a mediating factor that was transforming social class advantage to academic success⁴.

To examine the relationship between the three specified measures of student cultural capital, sex, social class origin, the effort they put into school related work and their school achievement, the procedure shown in Figure 7.1 was followed. It examines whether the variables mentioned above influence students' school achievement⁵. The selection of these variables was done in a fashion similar to other studies, such as that of Katsillis and Robinson (1990), which examined the effects of similar variables in school achievement.

The model presented in Figure 7.1 shows the steps that were followed to examine whether cultural capital directly influences students' performance at school. Previous studies have indicated that social class origin does have an effect on students' performance at school. But is cultural capital a mechanism that mediates in this influence?

⁴ School achievement in public secondary schools is becoming extremely important in view of the fact that under a new scheme proposed by the Ministry of Education under which students will be admitted to higher education, 5th and 6th year GPA (Grade point average). will play a crucial role in the allocation of positions. It has to be noted, though, that this scheme was not in effect in the case of the students included in the present sample.

⁵ Later a similar procedure will be followed in order to examine the influence of the above on students' level of educational aspirations. On the second model students' school achievement is added as well.

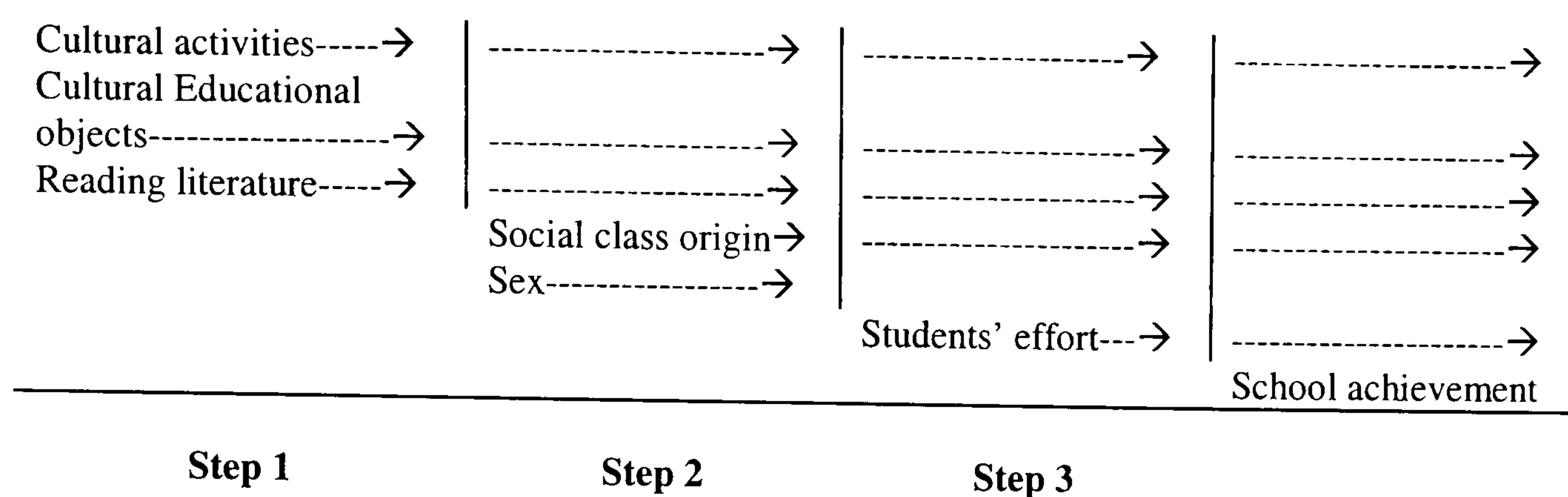


Figure 7.1: Cultural capital, social class, gender and students' effort variables: Influences on school achievement

For the analysis a multiple linear regression analysis was run. The description of the variables used in the analysis can be seen in Table 5.2 in Chapter 5. The general relationship among the different variables used in this analysis and also in the analysis of the effect of different variables in the level of students' aspiration (see section 7.3.3) can be examined by looking at the correlation coefficients in Table 7.4.

All the variables apart from the 'working class' variable are positively related to school achievement. From all the variables it can be seen that gender is less correlated with school achievement. Also, it can be observed that the relationship of the working class variable with almost all other variables is negative in direction, suggesting that working class students are less likely to attend cultural activities, own cultural/ educational objects, read literature and have high achievement at school.

	Educational aspirations	Literature	Cultural activities	Cult/Educ objects	Prof. middle class	Working class	Gender	Effort
Literature	.347							
Cultural activities	.321	.496						
Cult/Educ. Objects	.297	.310	.334					
Professional middle class	.331	.294	.269	.357				
Working class	-.352	-.279	-.234	-.354	-.404			
Gender	.068	.341	.210	-.116	-.025	.152		
Effort	.302	.229	.201	.066	.086	-.048	.300	
Achievement	.553	.389	.303	.354	.395	-.299	.101	.397

Table 7.4: Correlation coefficients among variables used in the analysis

Table 7.5 presents the standardised regression coefficients of the cultural capital, social class, gender and effort variables on school achievement. An examination of the first step of the causal sequence shows that the cultural capital variables account for almost 22 percent of the total variance in achievement. Of them, reading literature and having educational objects at home have the greatest effect whereas the influence of attendance to cultural activities is not significant. This implies that those who attend cultural activities do not seem to gain an advantage regarding achievement at school over those who do not.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Literature	.271***	.198***	.174**
Cultural activities	.088	.053	.025
Cult/Educ objects	.240***	.169**	.161**
Prof. middle class		.227***	.218***
Working class		-.090	-.080
Gender		.061	-.025
Effort			.327***
R square	.217	.275	.370

p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001
Table 7.5: Standardised coefficients (beta scores) representing influences of selected variables on students’ achievement

When one examines the next step in the sequence, where two social class variables and gender are added it can be seen that the variance explained increases by 6.7 percent. The professional middle class variable has the strongest positive effect on school achievement, with literature and cultural /educational objects having a positive but less significant effect.

In the third step where students’ effort is added into the model it can be seen that the variance explained increases by nearly 10 percent. Students’ effort now has the most significant influence of any variable on school achievement ($b=0.327$, $p<0.001$). The upper-middle class variable still has a significant positive effect ($b=0.218$, $p<0.001$) whereas the literature and cultural/educational objects variable continue to have a moderate effect ($b=0.174$, $p<0.01$ and $b=0.167$, $p<0.01$).

From the results obtained by the multiple regression analysis, it appears that student cultural capital as specified in the present analysis has, at most, a modest effect on academic achievement. Cultural consumption in the form of attendance at various cultural events does not seem to offer any real positive returns in terms of better achievement at school. As for literature reading and possessing certain educational/cultural objects in the home, they appear to have an effect on school achievement though their influence can be characterised as moderate. These findings should be examined in view of issues that have been presented in Chapter 2 regarding the operationalisation of the concept of cultural capital. One should not rush to interpret these findings as automatically totally impairing the cultural capital theory. That is, they do not *prove* that cultural capital is not a mediating factor between social class origin and academic achievement. It is highly possible that these measures, which, it must be said, are indicators of the presence of cultural capital among students, do not explore the effect of cultural capital to its full extent. Later on, parental cultural capital is examined to see its effects on students' educational prospects.

In any case, in the present analysis the students' effort measured by the amount of time students spend in school-related work and professional middle class origins seem to have by far the greatest influence on school achievement. Gender does not appear to have an effect on school achievement at all which indicates that any gender difference in the pattern of choice making should not be linked to performance in any way. Cypriot male and female students have similar levels of achievement at school.

7.3.3 Factors that influence the level of students' educational aspirations

The level of educational aspirations, that is whether a student aspires to pursue higher professional studies or have no studies at all, may be influenced by a number of factors. In this section, using data from the students' questionnaires, the influence of different variables on the level of students' educational aspirations are examined. The variables used in this analysis are the same as those used to examine students' educational achievement. The reasons for testing those particular variables are similar to the ones cited in the examination of factors influencing academic achievement, namely, whether students' cultural capital, which was shown to be

unequally distributed among students from families of different social class, was influencing the level of educational aspirations. A stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was run. The procedure followed was similar to the one that was used in the examination of factors that affect educational achievement. Different variables were added in the model each time (see Figure 7.2) to examine their effect on the level of educational aspiration.

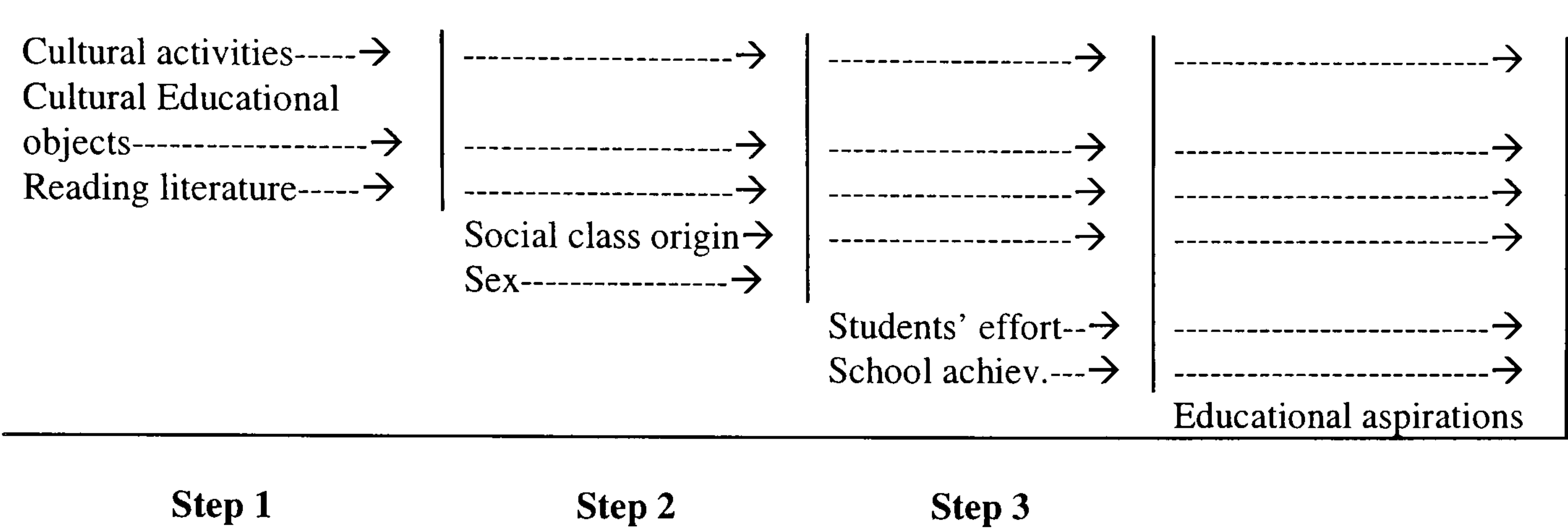


Figure 7.2: Cultural capital, social class, gender and students’ achievement and effort variables: Influences on Educational aspirations

The general pattern of relationships between variables are revealed in the correlation matrix in Table 7.4. That table shows the correlation coefficients generated for all the variable combinations. It shows that the level of educational aspirations is most highly related with student academic achievement. The relationship between level of educational aspiration and gender is weak. As was shown in the previous section (Section 7.3.2) the relationship between gender and academic achievement was equally weak. It is worth noting that the relationship between level of educational aspirations and the working class background variable are highly related ($r=0.352$) and the association between the two variables is negative in direction. But because ‘correlations does not imply causation’ (Kinnear and Gray, 1999:304) and because we wanted to examine the extent to which each variable contributed to the level of educational aspirations a stepwise multiple regression analysis was considered to be a reasonable option.

The educational aspirations were coded in the following way. Based on the answers that the students gave as to their first choice of further study, the levels of educational aspiration were coded as follows:

1. No plans for further studies

2. Lower/Sub/Non professional courses, not leading to a university degree i.e. BA or *Ptychio*⁶ (Secretarial, tourism, trade, etc.)
3. Middle professional courses (Education, Literature, Humanities, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Nursing, Computing, etc.)
4. High professional courses (Law, Medicine, Engineering, Accountancy, Architecture, etc.)

The maximum score was 4 for ‘high educational aspirations’ and the minimum was 1 for ‘no plans for further studies’. The mean score was 2.54 (SD = 0.98). Table 7.7, presents the standardised coefficients (beta scores) of the influence of selected variables on the level of educational aspirations. In the first step of the procedure the students’ cultural capital variables (reading literature, attending to cultural activities and owning educational/cultural objects) were entered in the equation. These variables contribute 17.7 percent of the variance in aspirations. Of that, the strongest effect is that of literature reading. The next variables entered in the model (model 2) were those of social class background and in particular *PMC* (1 for *PMC*, 0 for other) and *WC* (1 for *WC* and 0 for other) and gender. Their addition in the model increases the amount of variance explained to 23.8 percent. The variables that exert significant effect differentiate. It can be noticed that the working class background variable exerts a significant and strong effect on educational aspirations but negative in direction ($b = 0.196$, $p < 0.001$) whereas the professional middle class variable has a significant positive effect on educational aspirations ($b = 0.142$, $p < 0.01$). It seems that working class students are less likely to have high educational aspirations than their peers from higher social class backgrounds. Of the cultural capital variables, reading literature has a reduced but still significant effect ($b = 0.148$, $p < 0.05$) as has participating in cultural activities ($b = 0.125$, $p < 0.05$) across social class and gender.

In the final step of the model the introduction of the variables referring to the effort students put into school related work and to students’ academic achievement change the picture significantly. The total amount of variance explained by the variables in the causal model increases by 13.6 percent reaching 37.6 percent. The cultural capital variables appear to have a weak effect on students’ level of aspirations. This implies that students’ cultural capital measured by the indicators mentioned above do not

⁶ *Ptychio* is the Greek equivalent to a BA or BSc. It is usually obtained after a 4-year course at Greek Universities.

increase students’ level of aspirations and thus is not an advantageous resource. A point of caution needs to be made here. As in the case of academic achievement where cultural capital variables were found to have weak effects on achievement, it must be stressed again that these findings should not be interpreted as disproving the cultural capital theory. It appears that cultural capital, measured by these specific indicators, does not act as an exhaustive causal mechanism that mediates between social class and level of educational achievement nor does it offer advantages in relation to raising students’ level of aspirations across social classes. It could be the case that cultural capital circulating in the home among parents manifested in their education, knowledge and ability to ‘function’ effectively in an educational environment would have positive influences in raising their children’s educational aspirations.

The strongest effect on the level of educational aspirations from the variables examined is by far that of students’ achievement at school ($b= 0.380$, $p<0.001$). Another variable that has a significant effect is that of working class background, which continues to effect the aspirations in a negative direction ($b= -0.159$, $p<0.01$). The effort students put into schoolwork, has a significant moderate effect ($b= 0.108$, $p<0.01$) on students educational aspirations.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Literature	.215***	.148*	.065
Cultural activities	.154**	.125*	.095
Cult/Educ objects	.179***	.094	.027
Professional middle class		.142**	.053
Working class		-.196***	-.159**
Gender		.036	-.016
Effort			.108**
Achievement			.380***
R square	.177	.238	.376

* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Table 7.6: Standardised coefficients (beta scores) representing influences of selected variables on students’ educational aspirations

It seems, and one may argue that this is logical, that high achievers who work more diligently are more likely to aspire to pursue high professional studies. Working class students, however, are more likely to have lower educational aspirations regardless of the effort they put on schoolwork.

Charts 7.1 and 7.2 demonstrate, separately for male and female students, the distribution of the different levels of educational aspirations between the different social class backgrounds. It can be seen that the percentage of male and female students from professional middle class families have much higher educational aspirations compared with students from the other two groups.

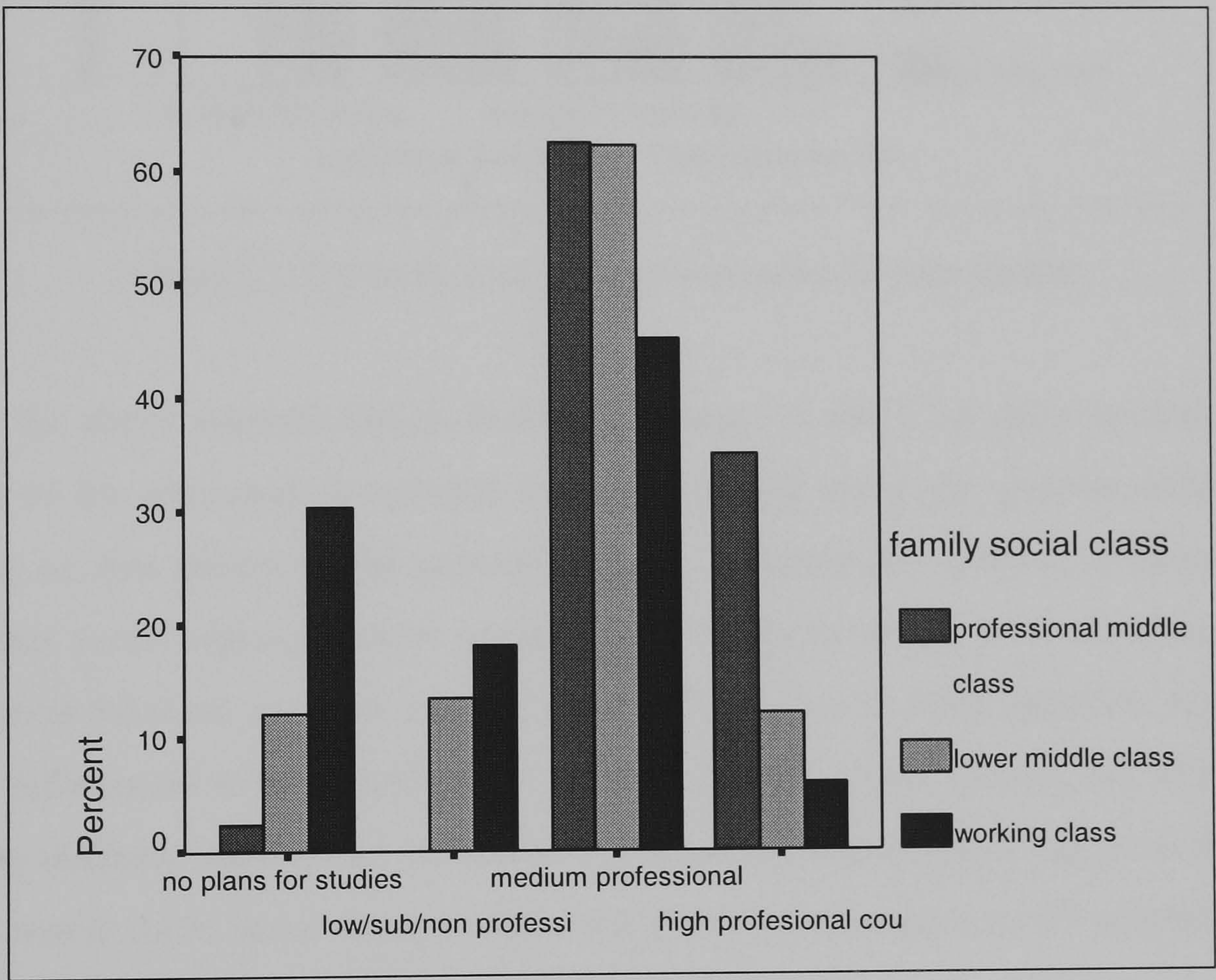


Chart 7.1: The level of educational aspirations of female students

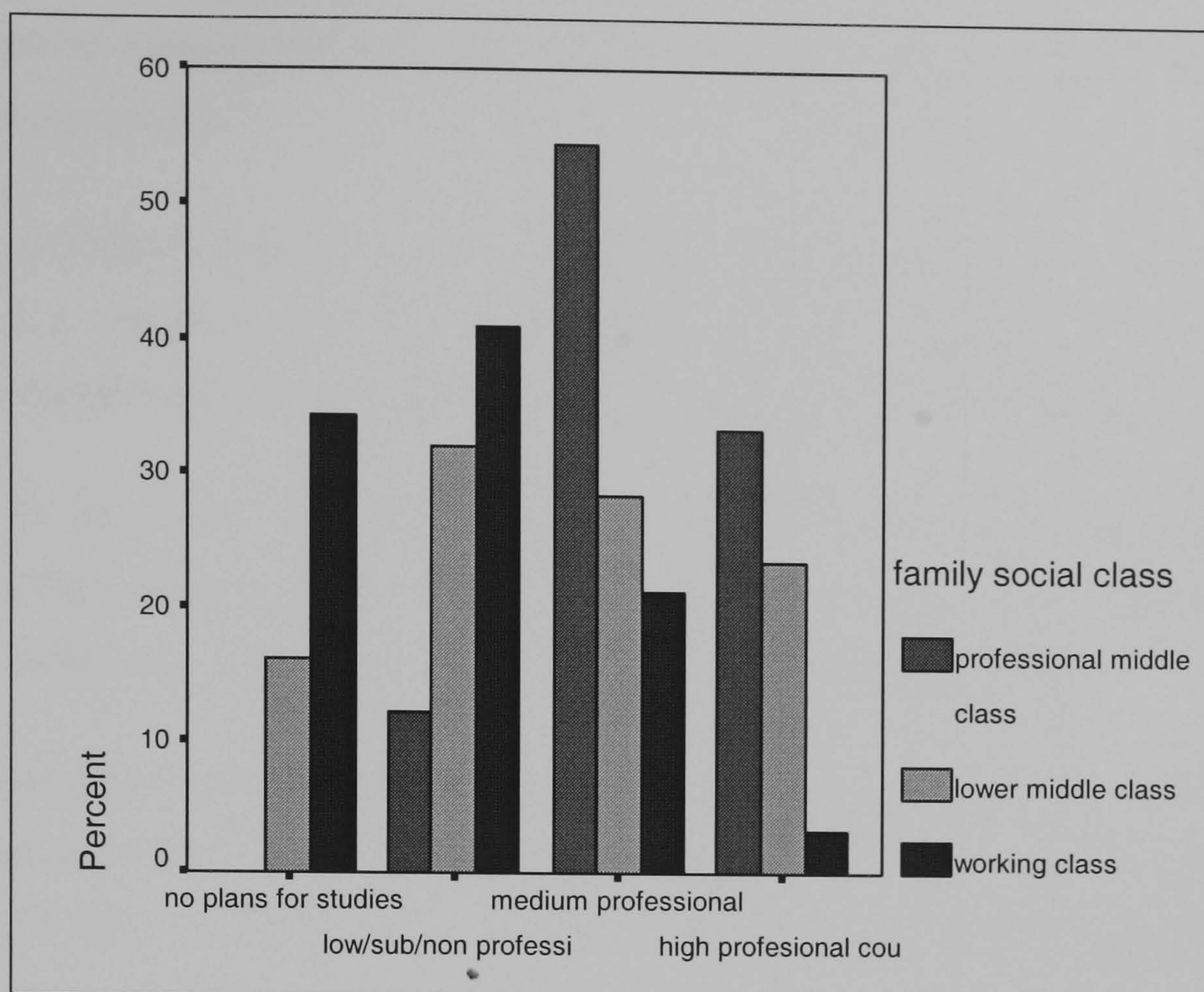


Chart 7.2: The level of educational aspirations of male students

From the above analysis and by looking at charts 7.1 and 7.2 a question arises that needs to be addressed. If cultural capital measured using the specific indicators, which, as was shown in the previous chapter, is unequally distributed among the different social classes, cannot explain the differences in the level of educational aspiration between students coming from different social class families, how can these differences be explained? Does parental cultural capital have a role to play in raising students' educational aspirations? What is the role of social capital in this? In other words could these resources offer insights into the existence of unequal levels of educational aspirations between social classes?

Before addressing this question the situation regarding the institution of *frontisteria* and their influence on students' schooling experiences is examined.

7.3.4 The *frontisteria*

The institution of *frontisteria* undoubtedly has an influence on students' academic performance, as the very nature of their existence is based on making students perform better at school or prepare for examinations. Having said that, it is very

difficult to examine the real effect of *frontisteria* on students' education for the following reasons:

- a) Students follow a number of *frontisteria* for mixed purposes simultaneously. (i.e. improve their school performance, prepare for university entrance examinations, acquire additional certificates, learn a foreign language)
- b) As parents' accounts from the interviews and previous research (Dimou, 1996) indicate, many students attend *frontisteria* for no clear purposes but rather just to make sure that they are not missing out on education.

Families invest large sums of money in their children's *frontisteria*. The sums spent can reach C£350 per month. The average amount of money spent, however, is C£102.3 (SD = C£64.84), which is still a considerable amount, bearing in mind that the average salary in Cyprus in 1999 was around C£500 per month. The number of students attending some kind of *frontisteria* seems to be in agreement with findings from other research that was presented in Chapter 4. In our sample the overwhelming majority of students 80.7 per cent (N=326) attended some kind of *frontisteria*. As to the kind of lessons that the students attended, the following table presents the picture that is revealed from the students' answers.

Attending to <i>frontisteria</i> for the purpose of:		N	%
1.	Learning a foreign language	173	42.8
2.	Preparing for entrance examinations for Greek Universities and the University of Cyprus	192	47.5
3.	Improving academic performance in school	135	33.4
4.	Preparing for entrance examinations for English speaking Universities (Britain and the USA)	6	1.5
5.	Art, classical music, ballet etc.	33	8.2
6.	Popular music, dance etc.	22	5.4
7.	Sports, swimming, etc.	53	13.1
8.	Other	39	9.7

Table 7.7: The kinds of *frontisteria* students attend

It was decided to explore further the students who attend *frontisteria* in terms of their social class background and the kind of secondary education they attend. This is done

because it was expected that social class background and the kind of education students attend (kind of school and specialisation) would reveal quantitative distinctions, which would signify the different characteristics of the students. The next two tables present the students attending *frontisteria* in terms of their social class background and kind of secondary school they attend.

Attending to <i>frontisteria</i> for the purpose of:	Student social class background		TOTAL
1. Learning a foreign language	PMC	21 (29.6)	173
	LMC	74 (47.7)	
	WC	78 (44.6)	
2. Preparing for entrance examinations for Greek Universities and the Univ. of Cyprus	PMC	35 (47.9)	192
	LMC	87 (56.1)	
	WC	70 (39.8)	
3. Improving academic performance in school	PMC	11 (15.1)	135
	LMC	46 (29.7)	
	WC	78 (44.3)	
4. Preparing for examinations for English speaking Universities (Britain and the USA)	PMC	2 (2.7)	6
	LMC	4 (2.6)	
	WC	0 (0)	
5. Art, classical music, ballet etc.	PMC	12 (16.4)	33
	LMC	13 (8.4)	
	WC	8 (4.5)	
6. Popular music, dance etc.	PMC	2 (2.7)	22
	LMC	13 (18.1)	
	WC	7 (4.0)	
7. Sports, swimming, etc.	PMC	7 (9.6)	53
	LMC	28 (18.1)	
	WC	18 (10.2)	
8. Other	PMC	6 (8.2)	39
	LMC	15 (9.7)	
	WC	18 (10.2)	

Note: In parenthesis the percentage within each group

Table 7.8: The kinds of *frontisteria* students from different social class background attend

Looking at Table 7.9 it can be seen that many students from working class backgrounds attend *frontisteria* in order to improve their academic performance in school (44.3%). There are other distinctive characteristics that may be observed. Proportionally more students from middle classes attend art and classical music lessons than students from working class backgrounds. This seems to be in accord with middle class students following more cultural events. As to the quality of *frontisteria* that students attend, an indication could be the amount of money different

families pay for their children’s *frontisteria*. If we assume that the more expensive the better the *frontisteria* then it may be assumed that middle class students attend better *frontisteria* as they appear to pay more for them (Table 7.10).

As to the kind of school students attend, from the analysis that follows in Table 7.9 it appears that students who attend private schools do not attend *frontisteria* in large numbers compared with the students who attend public schools. From that it can be assumed that the education of the private schools is of better quality than that of the public schools.

Attending to <i>frontisteria</i> for the purpose of:		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	Tech.	Priv.	TOTAL
1.	Learning a foreign language	29 (46.8)	29 (49.2)	39 (61.9)	16 (25.8)	30 (83.3)	28 (43.1)	2 (3.7)	173 (42.8)
2.	Preparing for entrance examinations for Greek Universities/ University of Cyprus	48 (76.2)	59 (96.7)	45 (71.4)	9 (14.5)	8 (22.2)	21 (32.3)	2 (3.7)	192 (47.5)
3.	Improving academic performance at school	6 (9.5)	6 (9.8)	33 (52.4)	37 (59.7)	22 (61.1)	25 (38.5)	6 (11.1)	135 (33.4)
4.	Preparing for examinations for English speaking Universities (Britain /USA)	0 (0)	1 (1.6)	1 (1.6)	0 (0)	2 (5.6)	0 (0)	2 (3.7)	6 (1.5)
5.	Art, classical music, ballet etc.	10 (15.9)	5 (8.2)	2 (3.2)	1 (1.6)	6 (16.7)	1 (1.5)	8 (14.8)	33 (8.2)
6.	Popular music, dance etc.	3 (4.8)	5 (8.2)	6 (9.5)	5 (8.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (5.6)	22 (5.4)
7.	Sport	6 (9.5)	9 (14.8)	13 (20.6)	4 (6.5)	2 (5.6)	10 (15.4)	9 (16.7)	53 (13.1)
8.	Other	1 (1.6)	2 (3.3)	13 (20.6)	13 (21.0)	0 (0)	4 (6.2)	6 (11.1)	39 (9.7)

Note: In parenthesis the percentage within each group

Table 7.9: The kinds of *frontisteria* students from different schools/specialisations attend
Looking at the above table (7.10) several other observations can be made:

- a) A large proportion of students who attended academically oriented specialisations S1 (Classics), S2 (Science) and S3 (Economics), attended

frontisteria for the purpose of preparing themselves for the entrance examinations for the Greek and Cypriot universities. This may indicate that the public schools do not adequately prepare students for their examinations. The interviews with the parents, however, reveal a very interesting dimension to the issue of attending *frontisteria*. As will be shown later on, it appears that regardless of the students’ academic performance or how well the public school prepares students for examinations, a mentality has developed that ‘imposes’ on students the need to attend *frontisteria* for fear that they may in some way be disadvantaged in relation to other candidates.

- b) A large proportion of students who attended specialisations S3, S4 and S5 needed *frontisteria* to cope with the demands of the secondary school.
- c) Nearly half of the public school students attended *frontisteria* to learn a foreign language. As other research showed (Vasileiou, V., Eliopoulou, S. et al, 1999) the number of students attending foreign language lessons is much bigger among students in lower grades in public secondary schools. Students tend to focus on other lessons during the last year in secondary school. The fact that so many students attend *frontisteria* to learn a foreign language indicates that the public school does not offer adequate education in the learning of foreign languages.
- d) Few students in their last grade in secondary school attend *frontisteria* for lessons that have to do with art, music, sports etc. and as was pointed out these students proportionally tend to come from higher social class backgrounds

	Professional middle class (N=50)	Intermediate Lower middle class (N=126)	Working class (N=139)
Amount of money spent (In Cyprus pounds)	126.84 (64.15)	114.05 (71.34)	82.22 (52.39)

Table 7.10: Means and SD (in parenthesis) of the amounts spent monthly for students’ *frontisteria*

7.4 The family as a source for providing support for educational processes

As was pointed out in earlier sections, this thesis considers the family to be the primary means through which resources are been made available to students to facilitate the expansion of their horizons for action (in this case for choice making in education). Part of the way these resources are mobilised and used are linked to parents' cultural capital which is partly the product of their experiences from their own educational paths. The majority of parents in our sample experienced various degrees of upward social mobility in relation to their own parents (see Appendix B). Their experiences influence the shaping of particular attitudes in relation to issues such as how social advancement is achieved and also in relation to gender issues.

7.4.1 Parents' personal experiences in relation to their own education

To offer a sense of the conditions under which the parents of students under investigation received their education and entered the labour market, brief accounts from the parents that were interviewed on the conditions under which they themselves received their education when they were at their children's age are presented. Parents' lived experiences are likely to have effects on the ways they try to provide for their children what many in Cyprus believe is the best credential for social success: Education.

Among some of the parents who experienced upward social mobility despite hardships that resulted from lack of financial and other resources, there is a distinct mentality for providing their children with all those opportunities and means for success that they did not have or they had to strive for under difficult and unfavourable conditions (i.e. Mrs Dimou, *PMC 1*). Parents' accounts reveal a strong sense of value and esteem for education and educated people, regardless of whether they achieved educationally themselves. Many acknowledged the fact that for significant numbers of people in their age group, education had been their ticket to social success.

In any case the parents' accounts of their own educational experiences and of how they entered the labour market reveal a picture of a society that during the 60s. 70s

and early 80s was undergoing changes and where opportunities were available to the people with the 'right' qualifications.

a) Professional middle class parents (PMC)

All the parents from the first group (Professional middle class) who were interviewed had the opportunity to have a successful educational trajectory. This success was not a straightforward procedure for all of them. Parents can be divided into three subgroups: a) those whose families offered them opportunities due to their social class position (financially and socially), b) those who came from humble social backgrounds but were lucky enough to be given educational opportunities from various sources (e.g. scholarships from the Greek and Cypriot governments) at a time when there was social demand for educated professionals and c) those who had to go through personal difficulties and deprivations to get their higher education.

For some parents the family's poor financial situation did not prove to be an obstacle for getting good education. Mrs Dimou (*Bank manager, PMC 1*) for example described her family's financial situation as being 'very poor' (her father was a shoe repairer '*papoutsis*'). Still her parents went through many 'sacrifices' to send her to a private English speaking school 'The American Academy', because they saw that she was an excellent pupil in primary school. Mrs Dimou believes that the fact that she attended an English private school, offered her a strong advantage to obtain employment in a bank. In 1976 she resigned from the bank and went with her husband for further studies in England and later rejoined the bank as a senior employee. Another parent Mr Konstantinou (*Senior Sales Manager, PMC 4*) also came from a poor family (his father was a tailor) but his parents sent him to a private school too. Later on he decided to go to England to study Automobile Engineering. He recalls:

Can you imagine ... I set off to go to England [*to study*] and my father had 300 pounds and he gave them to me...

For Mr Konstantinou that was the only financial help that he received from his family for his studies. To be able to support himself during his studies from 1975 to 1979 he had to work in a Cypriot grocer's in North London. Mr Fotiou (*Doctor, PMC 5*) came from a farming family and had to go through many difficulties to graduate from secondary education. Mr Kosta (*Agronomist, Senior Civil Servant,*

PMC 8) similarly came from a poor farming family. They both managed to obtain scholarships from the Greek Government and pursued studies in Greece.

These four parents were fortunate enough to come from families who valued education a great deal and who were ready to invest all they could afford so that their children could be 'pushed' to achieve highly in education. This support, which on its own was not enough, was backed by the help of external sources and/or by individual struggle, which later paid off for these individuals. Contrary to the above, the other four middle class parents came from well off families and did not experience serious difficulties in their educational journeys. All followed 'normal biographies'. Two of them Mr Paris (*Businessman, PMC 3*) and Mr Yiorgiou (*Lawyer, PMC 2*) had fathers who were well off businessmen, Mr Loizou's (*Biologist, Senior Civil Servant, PMC 6*) father was a civil servant and Mr Simou (*Ass. Headteacher in Sec. School, PMC 7*) came from a well off farming family and his father owned a Co-Op village shop as well.

b) Lower middle class parents (LMC)

For this second group of parents the picture that is revealed from parents' narratives about the conditions under which they received their education is similar to that of the first group. Some parents experienced immensely difficult conditions when they received their secondary education. Most parents came from large families of 5,6 or even 10 children in the case of Mrs Michael (*Junior Civ. Ser., LMC 14*).

Mr Athou (*Sales Manager in Semi-public Org., LMC 11*) had to go through many hardships to graduate from secondary education and had to abandon higher studies because his family could not afford them. Both Mr and Mrs Sotiriou (*Bank clerk and Insurance secretary, LMC 13*) came from very poor families. Mrs Sotiriou graduated from secondary school under financial deprivation (her father was a disabled worker selling lottery tickets) whereas Mr Sotiriou graduated from evening secondary school because he had to work to contribute to the family income at the same time. Similarly Mr Daniel (*Technician, LMC 15*) came from a farming family and had to go through many financial hardships. The only way he could remain in education was to attend a technical school to learn a 'trade', according to his father. A similar story is that of Mr Cristodoulou (*Owns a furniture workshop, LMC 16*) who attended a Technical school to learn a vocation.

Different to the above cases were that of Mrs Andreou (*Bank clerk, husband owns petrol station LMC 10*), Mrs Michael (*Junior Civ. Ser., LMC14*) and Mr Kostaki (*Ass. Accountant, LMC 12*) whose parents were better off financially and supported their children financially to graduate from secondary school. They were not in a position, however, to help them pursue higher studies. In the case of Mrs Michael even though she came from a large family the fact that her father was a priest and had a steady income as well as support from the Church, allowed them to have a comfortable family life. The case of Mr Kostaki is different from all the other cases as he was the only parent in this group to attend private secondary education, something he felt helped him secure a job as assistant accountant in a semi-public organisation.

Almost all the parents of this group managed to experience some kind of upward social mobility and this was the result of the fact that they managed to graduate from secondary school and enter relatively 'secure' jobs.

c) Working class parents (WC)

All the parents in the third group came from poor families who could not support their children financially to advance educationally. Also, in the case of some mothers they had to face a mentality of their time which indicated that for women it was most important to prepare a dowry for marriage rather than advancing educationally. Even the parents who managed to graduate from secondary education this was achieved against all odds. Many of them did not experience dramatic upward social mobility but rather they remained in a stable social status in relation to that of their fathers. On some occasions parents secondary schooling was interrupted at some point for various reasons. One characteristic example is that Mrs Litsa (*Hairdresser, WC 21*) who had to be taken out of secondary school because her family could not afford to pay the fees.

... my father had died the previous year and then we couldn't afford paying the fees, because then we were paying, and because I was a girl she [*her mother*] thought and I didn't need the school. I had to leave school to prepare a dowry...

Similarly, Mrs Antoniou (*Housewife, WC 17*) had to leave school after the third grade to work. At first she had said that the political troubles of the early 70s in Cyprus had a role to play in her decision not to stay in school but later she admitted that it was because she went to work in a factory

It was the time of many political turbulence in Cyprus then ... with Makarios and all ... the schools closed for some months due to demonstrations ... but the reality was that *I went to work* ... that's where it all comes down to really... I liked it then but now it is too late to regret it.

A similar case was that of Mrs Agapiou (*Housewife, WC20*) who did not go to secondary school at all and started working from the age of 12 in different factories to help her family financially.

Mr Loukas (*Barber, WC 19*) did not go to secondary school either. His family was very poor, his father did not earn much as a mineworker and later because of health problems he moved to Nicosia to work as a warehouseman and everybody in the family had to contribute. His father wanted him to learn '*techni*' (a trade) and soon after he finished primary school he sent him to a barber as a trainee for a few years. He describes very vividly his school life as one where education was not the main focus. He recalls

... they [school days] were happy days but I was under a lot of pressure from my father to attend to chores in the house. I had to attend to them in the morning before going to school and in the afternoon because both in our village and in Nicosia later [where they moved to] we had animals, chickens mostly, to attend to. I used to go to sell the eggs in the nearby neighbourhoods... and other jobs as well.

The two parents who graduated from technical schools were Mr Anastasiou (*Factory worker, WC 23*) and Mr Apostolou (*Office worker, WC 24*) who graduated from secondary school because they 'chose' to get vocational training from technical schools. They both described their schooling experiences as very difficult because they were under pressure to contribute to the family's income, especially Mr Anastasiou who grew up in a one-parent family.

Mrs Teresa (*Housewife, WC 18*) was the only parent to graduate from secondary school Gymnasium but had to face a different kind of pressure. She was immediately engaged at the age of 17 because her parents wanted her to settle early and obtain employment to help built her own dowry house.

d) Summing up parents' experiences

All the cases presented here in terms of the conditions that different parents experienced during their schooling years present some interesting points:

- a) Many parents, regardless of their present social class, experienced difficulties when they received their secondary education.
- b) Most of the parents received their education at a time when the educational system was going through expansion and when different educational and occupational opportunities were available. Some were better prepared to take advantage of these opportunities.
- c) Those who, for various reasons, achieved better educationally than others managed, as a result, to advance socially. Most parents in the PMC and LMC groups had experienced some kind of upward social mobility in relation to the social position of their parents. Parents from the WC group did not have equally similar opportunities. Many gave reasons that had to do with financial hardships but it can be said that these constraints were reinforced by the different prioritisations that different families made for their children i.e. girls to have a 'good' marriage, boys to get a 'good' education. As a result some mothers received fewer opportunities than their male age peers to further their education because of a traditional mode of thought that was advocating that the priority for women was help in preparing a dowry in order for them to get married. From the parents interviewed, this appears to have been more prevalent in lower social class families.
- d) Family's poor financial situation was a principal contributor for many to abandon school and to enter the labour market early to help their families.
- e) Many indirectly attribute their current social class status to the amount of schooling that they received⁷.

⁷ 'All my classmates that graduated [secondary school] got very good jobs' Mrs Litsa, (WC 21).

By examining parents own educational experiences it can be said that we get some indication as to their attitudes towards their children's education and the prioritisations for providing for their children. These attitudes are likely to have effects on the way they might respond to the different prospects that their children face and to the kind and amount of help that they will be willing to offer their children. Different mentalities develop around these issues ranging from mentalities that support offering children every educational opportunity to achieve their potential to attitudes such as children should get a job to help their family financially because parents have only limited potential to help their children's educational/ occupational prospects. It goes without saying that such mentalities are influenced to a great extent not just by economic capital but also by non-monetary capitals that each family has available to utilise for the benefit of children.

7.4.2 Parents' involvement in students' education: Choice of specialisation, school and *frontisteria*

The interviews with the parents reveal a diverse picture as to parents' involvement with their children's education, which partly relates to parental knowledge and 'ability' to engage in such processes. Parents involvement ranges from parents who are totally engaged with their children's schooling and are actively involved in the decisions that are made regarding the choice of school, specialisation and the kind of *frontisteria* that may be needed, to parents who are engaged in such processes to a lesser degree. It must be noted that apart from one case (WC 22), there were no parents who were totally estranged from educational processes relating to their children. One first and visible observation that can be made is that the level and the 'quality' of parental involvement with their children's education is a reflection of the parental cultural and educational capital as was described in Section 2.3.2.

a) Professional middle class parents (PMC)

All the parents from this group appeared to be actively engaged with the education of their children and to support their children's schooling in various ways. The parents of the students who attended private schools seemed to have had a leading role in selecting their children's school. Here is how they described the way they selected private schooling for their children:

Inter.: Whose decision was it that he [her son] would go to the English School?

Mrs Dimou: Em... I would say it was more my decision. He wanted to go himself, too, because he has an uncle who is a senior civil servant who was a graduate of English School. Talking with him he was talking constantly about the school and he influenced him a lot. And since Yiorgos was a good pupil we thought of offering him every opportunity since we went through many hardships and were not given any opportunities from our parents and had to struggle on our own to get what we wanted. We said that we would offer him every chance for a quality education because this is the only resource we could really offer him.

(Mrs Dimou, *PMC 1*)

Mr and Mrs Yiorgiou who also sent their daughter to private school had some reservations at first about sending their daughter to a private school.

Mr Yiorgiou: Personally I wouldn't mind if she attended the public schools. But I do not regret *our* choice. [going to private English speaking school]

Mr Paris was more categorical about the choice of sending his son to a private school.

Inter.: How did you come to make the decision to select a private school?

Mr Paris: Basically I believed that English should be a second mother tongue and you can achieve that only by attending English school rather than attending afternoon classes (*frontestiria*) or by going to England two or three years later. This was my reasoning for sending him to private English school and indeed today his English are better than his Greek.

The parents in the PMC group whose children attended public schools appeared not to have a very active role to play in the selection of specialisation except Mr Konstantinou (*PMC 4*) but were actively involved in the selection of *frontestiria* for their children. Mr Konstantinou described the choice of school for his daughter in the following way:

Inter.: You told me earlier that one of your daughters attends a private school and the other a public school. How come you made different choices?

Mr Konst.: I will tell you. I was intending to send my oldest daughter to a private school as well. But unfortunately when my daughter was finishing primary school it was the time that they said that the University of Cyprus would not accept students from private schools. So, we talked it over with my wife and we decided that it wouldn't be fair to deprive her of the opportunity to study here at the university.

Inter.: ...this changed thought didn't it?

Mr Konst.: Yes it did. Because later all the private schools reacted and they managed to reverse this ruling in six months with the condition that they would increase the teaching of the Greek language, I advised my daughter to leave but she said that she didn't want to go because her friends were there and so on and so I left her there.

Inter.: What happened with the younger daughter?

Mr Konst.: I made it clear to her from the beginning. Don't you start on me about your friends or anything because *you are going to a private school and you will make friends there too.*

As was said above, Mr Fotiou (*PMC 5*), Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*) and Mr Simou (*PMC 7*) appeared to be actively involved in the selection of *frontisteria* for their children because they saw that they were necessary to maximise the prospects for success for their children. Their children attended specialisations that were academically oriented. They all seemed to agree that because their children were high achievers at school it was ‘natural’ for them to progress to that specialisation so they did not regard their role as being direct although they admitted that they were always behind their children when they were making their decisions.

Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*) said among other things, the following which are illustrative of his involvement in the selection of his son’s *frontisteria*:

... in the previous years he (his son) was doing English and GCE Mathematics because I knew that the course was a very good one and the teacher who was teaching it was a friend of mine. He did this despite the fact that we knew from the beginning that he was not going to use it ... from the beginning we knew that he would go to Greece first. I told him “you can continue the English language later”.

Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*)

Mr Kosta (*PMC 8*) is a notable example of a parent who was actively involved in the education of his daughter but whose daughter chose to follow a specialisation other than the one suggested by him. His daughter followed the *Classics* (S1) specialisation instead from the one that he insisted she should follow *Science* (S2). Mr Kosta insistence on her following that particular specialisation was because of the fact that he felt that it would offer his daughter more options for future studies. The fact that he gave in to the wishes of his daughter is an interesting issue. He admitted that the fact that his child was a daughter had a role to play. As is discussed later, there seems to be a different attitude towards the choices of the students depending on their sex, something that is a reflection of the different expectations that the Cypriot society has for males and females. In any case, despite his initial attitude Mr Kosta supported his daughter at all times and he actively enrolled her in *frontestiria* lessons (which he, as the others, regarded as being ‘essential’ for success) in all the subjects that she was going to take in her entrance examinations.

b) Lower middle class parents (LMC)

From the parents of the second group there was a range of parental engagement in their children's schooling. Overall, however, it can be said that most parents were actively engaged in the schooling of their children, particularly in enrolling children in *frontisteria*. In the selection of school or specialisation there were different approaches. Mostly, however, the parents supported their children's decisions.

Some parents played a decisive role in their children's schooling like Mr Athou (*LMC 11*) who chose to send his son in an English private school.

Inter.: How did come to make the decision for Petros to go to a private school?

Mr Athou: the decision was not Petro's. We (parents) made it for Petro. He did not want to go at first. I did. I believed and I still believe that the English private education, the way they do ... is more useful for the students. The English language, the GCEs ... and their ways, their discipline, the attention they get from the teachers and these things. Today after seven years I believe it was the right thing to do.

Some parents like Mr Nikolaou (*LMC 9*) were equally actively involved but the decisions had the element of discussion and agreement with the children as this extract shows:

We sat together and *we* decided [about her specialisation]. I saw her goals. She basically wants to become a teacher.

Mr Kostaki (*LMC 12*) said that the decisions were taken jointly with his daughter. For most of the parents in this group, however, it was a decision that was made by the students themselves with the parents supporting them. Mrs Andreou's description is indicative of this approach.

It was her choice. We did not influence her then and we did not influence the choices that she made for her entrance examinations. Sometimes it is a better to let children make their own decision because when you force them to do something they really don't like somewhere there is a problem. They may quit.

Mrs Andreou, *LMC 10*

Equally Mr and Mrs Soteriou (*LMC 13*) and Mr Cristodoulou (*LMC 16*) supported their sons' decision to follow the specialisations that they wanted. Mrs Michael (*LMC 14*) said that she and her husband accepted their son's decision to follow the specialisation he felt he was good at (Science S2) while Mr Daniel (*LMC 15*) also accepted his daughter's wish to follow the foreign language specialisation S5 because he saw that it was something she was good at.

As for the selection of *frontisteria*, however, all parents were actively involved in enrolling their children in *frontisteria* which all saw as being essential for providing the best possible opportunities for them.

c) Working class parents (WC)

The parents of this group appeared to be interested in the schooling processes of their children but their involvement was usually limited to supporting the decisions that their children made. As was said earlier, many relied on their children for information about the various prospects and about the kind of *frontisteria* their children might want to enrol in. All, apart from one case (WC 22), who seemed to be completely disengaged from the processes referring to his son's education, seemed to care a great deal but usually lacked the knowledge, the necessary information which forms the ability to engage successfully with the educational processes affecting the students. Here is how Mr Argyrou described his *involvement* in the selection of specialisation for his daughter:

To tell you the truth it was something that was decided by my daughter. She knew what was essential for her. (*Mr Argyrou, WC 19*)

Mrs Agapiou is another typical example of a parent who accepted the decisions that her child makes for her future. She acknowledges that she had no role to play in that selection and that it was the outcome of her daughter's evaluating her own 'abilities'.

Inter.: How did you come to make this choice?

Mrs Agapiou: It was her own decision.

Inter.: Did you play any part in her decision?

Mrs Agapiou: No. Whatever she wanted she could do it. She could see her abilities herself. (*WC 20*)

In a similar fashion Mrs Antoniou commented:

... it was her choice because it was what she wanted.

(*Mrs Antoniou, WC 17*)

Other parents from this group Mrs Teresa (WC 21), Mr Anastasiou (WC 23) and Mr Apostolou (WC 24) appeared to be very interested and knowledgeable about the choices their children made in relation to the kind of schooling they attended and whether they would attend *frontisteria*, as well as the kind of lessons they thought were necessary for them. But it must be pointed out that all commented that *it was the children's choices* and like Mrs Agapiou justified the way these choices were made by saying that it was what their children believed to be the best choice for them, either because it corresponded to their inclinations or because they thought it

was the best option to consider in view of their academic ‘abilities’. They all appeared not to have been directly engaged in these processes, something that on one occasion resulted in a problematic outcome (*WC 21*) whereby Mrs Teresa’s son was in danger of not successfully graduating from a very academically demanding specialisation.

All the examples of parental involvement in children’s education are closely associated with parental cultural capital. Parental involvement connects to their knowledge of the various prospects that each kind of education offers. From the parents answers different categories of parents emerge. ‘Fully-engaged’ parents are those who possessed high amounts of cultural capital and they were engaged in the education of their children. These parents usually had the knowledge of how the system worked as well as of the various prospects available. These parents seem to play a decisive role in the educational choices that were made in relation to their children’s schooling. ‘Semi-engaged’ parents are those who, even though they may have the willingness to get involved in the education of their children were usually lacking or did not have the ‘right’ kind and amount of cultural capital to facilitate a successful engagement in various educational processes. These parents usually ‘negotiated’ their own involvement in educational processes with their children. Some of these parents seem to allow their children to take the initiative in making decisions for their future and they limit their own involvement to expressing moral and psychological ‘support’ and to providing financial assistance (where possible).

7.5 Parents’ expectations of their sons and daughters: the role of gender in the choice of future educational and occupational destinations

Throughout the analysis and presentation so far the role of gender in the educational and occupational choices appears to follow a particular pattern. Some of the key issues in relation to gender that were presented, could be summarised as follows:

- a) The regression analysis pointed out that gender does not appear to affect academic achievement or the level of educational aspirations in a significant

manner, which implies that both male and female students achieve similarly in school and have similar levels of aspirations. Differentiation between male and female students appears when a close examination is made as to the kind of educational aspirations each group of students have. Similarly, there are clear distinctions in the occupational aspirations of male and female students.

- b) There are clear distinctions between the kind of secondary schooling male and female students attend. Male students appear to be over-represented in some sections of Lyceum and in Technical education whereas female students appear to be over-represented in other section of the Lyceum. This inevitably has effects on the kind of choices that male and female students make for their future educational and occupational destinations.
- c) Roughly equal numbers of male and female students intend to pursue some kind of higher education. Female students seem to be focusing in greater numbers in areas such as Education, Humanities, Social and Behavioural sciences, Fine Arts and Law. Male students seem to concentrate their interest in areas such as Economics, Engineering-Architecture, the Military schools and Mathematics-IT.
- d) As to occupational aspirations of male and female students the following patterns were observed. Roughly equal numbers of male and female from professional middle class families aspire to do 'traditional' or 'modern' professional jobs. About 40 percent of female lower middle class students expect to do teaching jobs (in primary or secondary education). Lower middle class boys appear to favour entering an intermediate/ sub-professional or technical job (27.2 percent). Most male working class students (60.7 percent) aspire to reach intermediate / sub-professional or technical jobs whereas nearly half the female working class students aspire to enter intermediate / sub-professional / technical jobs or clerical / secretarial jobs.

Next, parents' expectations of their sons and daughters, which connect to their attitudes and beliefs about the role of men and women in Cypriot society is examined. This is something that, one might expect, would influence the way families cope with the future prospects of male and female students.

Parents' answers in the interviews about whether their expectations were influenced by their children's gender reveal a picture that cuts across the social class division. Parents' social class did not prove to be distinctive in the pattern of answers. The parents could be roughly categorised into two main groups in terms of their attitudes to the role of gender in the choices made. On the one hand there is a group of parents who may be characterised as 'liberal' due to the fact that they adopt an attitude that does not appear to differentiate their children on the grounds of their gender. On the other hand, there is a group of parents who may be characterised as 'conservatives' who seem to argue that male and female students have a different position and 'purpose' within the society and as a result the choices that they make should reflect that. There were also parents who were advocating for one position but in practice doing the opposite. Table 7.15 classifies the parents according to the views that they expressed on the role of gender in the choice making for future destinations.

As can be seen from Table 7.15 half of the parents can be classified as being conservative in their attitudes and beliefs on the role of gender in the choice making about future destinations which they see as being directly linked with the future role of men and women in society. Some parents held very strong views about it as the case of Mr Paris (*PMC 3*) and Mr Nikolaou (*LMC 9*) who expressed similar views.

Inter: Would you have different expectation if your child was a girl?

Mr Paris: Yes there is a differentiation in the choices of education and sector. But it is not a rule.

Inter: What would you personally have done if your child was a girl?

Mr Paris: It is a matter of character I think. That if it's a son you push him towards your business activities. For the daughter I believe you put her on a different level. You see her tendencies and wishes as well. You are not so demanding of a daughter. Because, for the financial needs of a future family we still see that the weight still falls primarily on a man rather than on a woman. Anyway, a woman may contribute but the main responsibility is in the hands of a man. That is how we still see this ... so, the plans could be different for a girl.

(Mr Paris, PMC 3)

Similar views were expressed by Mr Nikolaou (*LMC 9*) who expressed his belief that men and women are expected to perform different roles in the Cypriot society.

Inter.: Did the sex of your child play a role in the choices that you made?

Mr Nikolaou: Yes definitely. I would never send my daughter to become a Civil Engineer.

Inter.: Why not?

Mr Nikolaou: Not that it is bad, but it would sound strange to me. It would be one of the things that you rarely hear about... There is a difference between boys and girls. For a girl it doesn't matter if she earns £300 a month. It is bonus for her family. The fewer qualifications she has the easier it is to get employment. She doesn't have the pressure that she should support a family. If

she has her house [*he refers to the issue of dowry*]...For a son things are different. He cannot support a family with a salary of 300 and 350 pounds. I would not accept this for my son. The son is under a lot of pressure.

Mr Nikolaou (LMC 9)

The above views reflect what might be characterised as traditional/conservative attitudes towards the role of men and women in society. That is that men should be in a position that they should have the responsibility of being the primary wage earners, whereas the financial contribution of a working-woman in a family is a bonus but not a necessity. According to this line of thinking a woman's main responsibility is in the house and she has not the same pressure as the man to bring income home. Her income is a *bonus* rather than a necessity. The fact that this position of the place of women in society was the main reason for driving three *LMC* mothers (Cases 17, 18, 20) to leave their jobs and stay at home to raise their children.

Three *LMC* families made choices about the secondary education of their sons and daughters that reveal having a certain attitude about the education of children in relation to their gender. These three families sent their sons, but not their daughters, to private schools. They appear to be conservative in this respect because they seem to be offering different opportunities to their children. Mr Daniel (*LMC 15*) admits that initially, when his children were younger, he held some very conservative ideas about the opportunities he would give to his older son and younger daughter. At the point of interviewing he appeared to be changing his attitudes. But still he had made different plans for his son and his daughter. His son attended private school and was about to go to the USA to study Genetics with a partial scholarship. His daughter was directed to attend college in Cyprus to study special education.

Mr Daniel: I must admit that when they were younger I could say that I wanted my son to become something like this (*Geneticist*) ... because I could see that he had the potential I may have had different thoughts in my mind. But now that my daughter is graduating too I do not distinguish them at all because every child has its personality.

Mr Daniel (LMC 15)

Even though Mr Athou (*LMC 11*) expressed some liberal views about the issue of both sexes being given equal opportunities, what he actually did with his children contradicted these liberal views. In fact he sent his son to a private English-speaking school that he considered being of a better quality whereas he did not do the same for his daughter who attended the public lyceum.

Mrs Andreou's son (*LMC 10*) also attended a private English speaking private school and she and her husband had different plans for their children. For her son she said:

Yes sending my son to the English school meant future studies in Britain but because he was a **son** and you think a bit differently ...

Whereas for her daughter she commented:

If she follows economics for me a Bank is ideal [*place for employment*] for a **woman**.

Other parents made comments that reveal the fact that they distinguished between their children in terms of their gender. Mr Konstantinou (*PMC 4*) and Mr Argyrou (*PMC 19*) both argued that they saw technical education as fitting male children better.

Mr Konstantinou: Yes. Definitely. If I had a son I would have sent him to follow a Technical job. My father was a tailor. He wanted me to become a fashion designer or a tailor. (*PMC 4*)

Mr Argyrou: If I had a son I would send him to the Technical school to learn a trade (*techni*). Everybody wants to have higher studies, nobody wants to go to learn trade any more. And there are jobs in this field ... there is money. (*WC 19*)

Mr Kosta (*PMC 8*) acknowledged the fact that there were different expectations of men and women in the Cypriot society even though he said that he held liberal views on the matter. He said

I don't think I would have treated a son differently [he had two daughters]. Even though gender plays a role, especially in our society, because you expect a man to get a better job to do better studies ... he is the provider in a family whereas you can't have the same expectation of a woman because if she totally devotes herself into her career she will leave her family out. So, you make a compromise there. You are not so demanding of a daughter. You have higher expectations of a son.

Mr Kosta (PMC 8)

Mr Simou (*PMC 7*) had this to say about the issue when talking about the fact that both his son and daughter followed primary school teaching. He seems to suggest that primary school teaching is more suitable for a daughter than a son.

I honestly tell you I would prefer my son to choose something else, one other study to go and study abroad since he is a **son**. Now you will tell me how about your daughter? She was an excellent student as well but ... she is a daughter.

Mr Simou (PMC 7)

The parents who expressed liberal views on the issue more or less expressed the idea that even though in the past there might have been discriminations against women

nowadays they would respond equally to both sons and daughters. Mrs Dimou (*PMC 1*) comments are typical of the answers that the ‘liberal’ parents gave

I believe that it is unfair what some parents do ... to distinguish between boy and girl. I believe that parents should give the best provision to their children whether they are boys or girls is education.

Mrs Dimou (PMC 1)

Mrs Litsa (*WC 21*) also had a ‘liberal’ attitude towards giving the same opportunities to her daughter and she appeared determined to back her daughter to the highest levels of education.

Inter.: Up to what level of education would you be prepared to push your daughter?

Mrs Litsa: I won’t deprive her if she wants to. If she succeeds in passing teacher, she plans to work for a few years and then study history or political science. She is telling us that she will be studying until she is 30.

Inter.: If your child was a boy would you have different expectations?

Mrs Litsa: I don’t think so. It is not as it used to be some years ago when you would push the son higher and give priority to a son. I see all of them the same way.

Mrs Litsa (WC 21)

In general most PMC and LMC were more articulate in expressing their attitudes (be they traditional/conservative or liberal) towards the role of women in society rather than most WC interviewees. In any case though, parents, regardless of their social class, adopted both conservative and liberal attitudes towards gender roles in society. Parents’ attitudes could be placed on a continuum ranging from being conservative to liberal and some were moderate whereas others were more absolute (see Table 7.15). Below two types of parents are presented.

a) Parents with conservative attitudes

In general what can be said about these parents is the fact that they appear to have different expectations for boys and girls. This is reflected in the choices of specialisation in the secondary education but also in the choice of future educational and occupational destinations. Part of this may be attributed to the fact that there is a strong belief that the primary wage earner in a future family should be the man. There is, therefore, pressure on the boys to make more ‘pragmatic’ choices. Such choices would offer more possibilities of leading to secure employment. For the girls it is different. There is flexibility due to the expectations that the primary goal of a woman is her home and family. Because the pressure for employment is not intense, female children can ‘afford’ to make choices based more on interests and inclinations rather than necessity. As

was pointed out earlier, women can afford to be unemployed for some time or even not fully employed.

b) Parents with liberal attitudes

The parents who fell into this category do not seem to distinguish between their children in terms of their gender in the opportunities that they provide to them. They appeared to be equally prepared to support their sons and their daughters. It appears that in general there is a tendency towards strengthening this liberal approach in contemporary Cyprus. This should be viewed in relation to the positive change in the position of women in today's society compared to the position they had two or three generations back (see Appendix B, comparison of grandmothers' and mothers' education)

Case No	Interviewee (Pseudonyms)	Liberal or conservative according to their views on the role of gender
1.	Mrs Dimou, <i>Bank manager</i>	Liberal
2.	Mr and Mrs Yiorgiou, <i>Lawyer, Interior Designer</i>	Liberal
3.	Mr Paris, <i>Owner of large imports company</i>	Very conservative
4.	Mr Konstantinou, <i>Senior sales manager</i>	Conservative
5.	Mr Fotiou, <i>Doctor</i>	Liberal
6.	Mr Loizou, <i>Senior Civil Servant</i>	Moderately conservative
7.	Mr Simou, <i>Deputy Head teacher Sec. School</i>	Moderately conservative
8.	Mr and Mrs Kosta, <i>Senior Civil Servant, Bank clerk</i>	Liberal
9.	Mr Nikolaou, <i>Food shop owner</i>	Conservative
10.	Mr and Mrs Andreou, <i>Petrol shop owner, Bank clerk</i>	Expressed liberal views but acted in a conservative fashion
11.	Mr Athou, <i>Sales Manager in semi public org.</i>	Liberal in theory but conservative in practice
12.	Mr Kostaki, <i>Assistant Accountant</i>	Liberal
13.	Mr and Mrs Sotiriou, <i>Secretary in civil Service, Bank employee</i>	Not very clear
14.	Mrs Michael, <i>Junior Civil Servant</i>	Moderately conservative
15.	Mr Daniel, <i>Technician in Semi-public organisation</i>	He had being very conservative but his views are changing. Still he is conservative.
16.	Mr Christodoulou, <i>Owns furniture workshop</i>	Liberal
17.	Mrs Antoniou, <i>Housewife</i>	Conservative
18.	Mrs Teresa, <i>Housewife</i>	Not clear about it
19.	Mr Argyrou, <i>Barber</i>	Conservative
20.	Mrs Agapiou <i>Housewife</i>	Moderately conservative
21.	Mrs Litsa <i>Hairdresser</i>	Liberal
22.	Mr Michalis <i>Traditional confectioner</i>	Liberal
23.	Mr Anastasiou, <i>Factory Worker</i>	Liberal
24.	Mr Apostolou, <i>Office worker</i>	Liberal

Table 7.11: Parents and the role of gender in choice making

One other group of parents seem to argue for liberal views on the matter whereas in reality their action did not support those views. This was clearly demonstrated in the case of three *LMC* parents (Cases 10, 11 and 15). These parents seem to acknowledge what is ‘politically’ correct to say but the fact that they invest more in their sons’ education than their daughters is indicative of the fact that deep down they are more influenced by what was traditionally the practice, that is to favour male children, rather than female.

7.6 Summary

This chapter has examined the role of cultural capital available to Greek Cypriot families in various forms, ‘qualities’ and quantities’ and how different kinds of families utilise this resource to influence their children’s educational processes. Cultural capital manifested in students’ cultural activities, reading habits and ownership of certain educational/cultural objects, was found to be distinct in families of different social class. It did not appear to exert a significant influence on student academic performance. Acknowledging the limitations of using certain indicators to describe a much wider theoretical concept these findings were not considered to be dismissive of the cultural capital theory. Looking closely at cultural capital in another form manifested in parents’ knowledge and ‘ability’ to engage in current educational processes in Cyprus to influence prospects for their children, parental involvement in children’s schooling, which included the examination of the institution of *frontisteria* was examined. Parents’ own past educational experiences and educational trajectories inform their own cultural capital and connect to the way parents view gender affecting choice making processes. The kind of attitude, conservative or liberal that parents adopt potentially influences the way economic and social capital resources might be mobilized to facilitate choice making for future educational and occupational destinations. Next, the role of social capital in choice making in education, particularly how it intertwines with cultural and economic capitals to produce distinctive habituses that shape part of each individuals’ ‘horizon for action’, is examine closely.

Chapter 8:

Social capital and choice making processes

8.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the role of social capital in the choice making processes for post secondary school destinations. Chapter 6 presented the different choices of the students and their families regarding students' future educational and occupational aspirations and some interesting social class and gender patterns were uncovered. The search for possible explanations led to the examination of ways with which cultural capital in its different forms potentially influences these choices (Chapter 7). In this chapter it is argued that a vital aspect in the examination of social capital in educational choice making refers to the issue of the fungibility of the various forms of capital (economic, cultural, social) to facilitate choice making by enhancing or restricting opportunities.

As was discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 *social capital* is a resource that is unequally distributed among different social classes and, as with other forms of capital, it can offer symbolic as well as tangible profits to its possessors. As such, it is suggested in this study that it can be used to offer explanations of the way decisions as to future educational and occupational destinations are being made. First of all, the different ways that students have anticipated their families help in materialising their future aspirations are presented. As is shown in the next section their responses point to the central position of social capital in the kind of help anticipated. To get an understanding of the family *social capital* and its possible applications the nature of the social networks of parents is examined. The way social networks influenced parents' own lives, particularly at the time when they were in the process of seeking employment, is examined because their experiences are considered to be influential in shaping parents' attitudes and beliefs on the issue of using such networks to promote social goals. These attitudes are expected to play a crucial role in parents' willingness to resort to the use of such networks. After examining parents' willingness to resort to social networks, how parents understand the current processes of mobilising social networks to achieve social goals (the use of *mesa* or *rousfeti*, as they are known in Greek) are investigated. Central to the examination of strategies that different parents employ to cope with the differential access to social capital is

the ways with which various other capitals multiply or deplete the potentials of students and their families to make choices thus enhancing or restricting their ‘horizons for action’. The availability of *social capital*, parents’ understanding of the ways social networks function in contemporary Cyprus, the strategies that they develop to respond to the availability (or unavailability) of social capital, constitute essential parts of the familial *habitus*.

8.2 Students’ expectations of their family being a source for providing support for occupational choices made

In this section students’ answers from the questionnaires relating to the kind of support that they expected their family to provide for them in order to materialise their occupational choices are presented. Their answers point to the issue of *social capital* as a potential resource and this consequently has implications for the kind of educational choices that the students make.

It is indisputable that the family is the most immediate source for providing support for realising the occupational aspirations of youngsters. From the students’ responses 72.3 percent of them indicated that they expected their family to help them in securing employment. The higher the family social class background of the students the more help they expected from their families. This could be linked to the quality and quantity of non-monetary resources that middle class families may have available to mobilise in order to provide support for the students. All groups, however, indicated high levels of anticipation for getting help from their families.

	I expect my family to help me find employment ...		TOTAL
	YES	NO	
1. PMC students	61 (83.6)	12 (16.4)	73(100)
2. LMC students	113 (72.9)	42 (27.1)	155(100)
3. WC students	118 (67.1)	58 (32.9)	176(100)
TOTAL	292 (72.3)	112 (27.7)	404 (100)

Table 8.1: Students’ expectations for getting help from their families

It is very interesting to note that the answers that the students provided to the open-ended question: “How do you expect your family to help you find employment?” provide a clear link to familial social capital. Table 8.2 presents a summary of the different answers that the students gave. It can be seen that the most common answer by far (nearly half of the answers given) was the one that referred to the family’s social capital (social networks, connections, friends, acquaintances etc.) In total 102 answers pointed to help from sources directly connected to their family’s social capital (in terms of inter-familial networks) whereas other answers (Table 8.2) indirectly connect to other aspects of familial social capital (i.e. join family business, work with parents). Of the 102 responses directly associated with social networks and connections, 22 (nearly 20%) used words such as *meso* or *rousfeti*. The use of these words clearly point to the kind of social capital students and parents alike regard as being of the kind being mostly effective in the field of materialising occupational aspirations. At this juncture, a point needs to be made about the explicit use of these words. The use of *meso* or *rousfeti* to achieve social aims is something that, to my understanding of the modern Cypriot culture, people tend to keep as a private family matter. This because to openly advocate that one anticipates help from *meso* he/she might potentially jeopardise the expected social goods that may be the result of its use. The logic behind it is that the resort to *meso* or *rousfeti* to achieve a social goal is often accompanied by bypassing legitimate processes and ‘stepping over’ other people’s similar interests, (hence their use to overcome possible competition¹) and thus by keeping it a private matter such practices remain unchallenged.

One other interesting point that may be made is that students from all social class family backgrounds were expecting help from their family’s social capital. The question is, however, who have the best chances of successfully benefiting from that resource. This connects to the ‘quality’ of the networks available to different social class families and to the parents’ willingness to resort to the networks they have associated themselves with. This is an issue that is explored in detail below.

¹The fact that people are willing to openly admit willingness to resort to *mesa* indicates to me that it may becoming more and more a legitimate means for achieving goals, therefore to make a claim that ‘mesa’ will be used to secure ‘profits’ would not necessarily raise any eyebrows, as a sign of disapproval. In fact it may be a sign or a demonstration of symbolic power on behalf of the person who makes such claims.

Other answers that the students provided as potential help they expected from their families included financial support, moral psychological support etc.

<i>I expect my family to help me ...</i>	<i>PMC</i>	<i>LMC</i>	<i>WC</i>	<i>Total*</i>
1. With their connections/acquaintances	19	47	36	102**
2. Money/financially	7	6	15	28
3. Moral support	5	8	6	19
4. Join family business/work with parents	5	8	5	18
5. Guidance /advice	3	7	0	10
6. Help me look for a job	0	0	15	15
7. Not sure /Don't know	2	3	4	9
8. Other answers	7	16	16	39
TOTAL	48	95	97	240

* Note: These are numbers of answers and not of respondents. Some respondents cited two or in few cases more than two ways they expected their families to help them in their employment

** Note: In 22 cases the words *meso* or *rousfeti* were used

Table 8.2: Ways with which students expected their families to help them

As to the level of confidence that the students indicated they had expected that their family’s help would be effective, the majority were either “Very Confident” or “Confident” (52.4 %). It seems that of the students who expected their families’ support the majority had high hopes that such help would be effective. If one looks at the level of confidence within each student group it appears that PMC students were more confident that their families would be in a position to help them in finding employment. As was mentioned earlier this might connect with the amount and the quality of the family’s *social capital*. That said, however, the other two groups of students showed equally high levels of confidence about the expected help they thought their families would provide them with. But it must be noted that one in three working class students did not expect any familial help compared with one in six students from professional middle class families. All of the above point to the need to explore in detail social capital as a source for providing support for the choices made.

Level of confidence within the different student groups						
	Very confident N %	Confident N %	Not very confident N %	Not at all confident N %	Expected no help N %	TOTAL N %
1. PMC students	22 (30.1)	22 (30.1)	17 (23.4)	0 (0)	12 (16.4)	73 (100)
2. LMC students	41 (26.5)	38 (24.5)	31 (20.0)	3 (1.9)	42 (27.1)	155 (100)
3. WC students	45 (25.6)	44 (25.0)	26 (14.7)	3 (1.7)	58 (33.0)	176 (100)
TOTAL	108 (26.7)	104 (25.7)	74 (18.3)	6 (1.5)	112 (28.7)	404 (100)

Table 8.3: The level of confidence with which students expected their families to help them within the different student groups

8.3 *Social capital* and the Greek-Cypriot family

In any society, individuals, families and groups connect with each other through different social networks. Individuals and families draw upon their networks for help and support in times of need. In Chapter 4 the formation of certain social networks for the pursuit of social objectives in Cyprus was presented. As was discussed there, a mentality has developed over the years, in Cyprus, about the use of social networks, connections and acquaintances to achieve different social goals. This mode of thought maintains that the use of social networks, the application of *mesa* is an extremely effective way to achieve socially. This study does not examine the pursuit of different social goals. It focuses on the application of those social networks, which can potentially provide real or symbolic advantages for materialising the educational and occupational aspirations of young people and their families.

In this study social capital has been described as a resource that can be found in the social networks that parents create and have available to mobilise and use in an effort to produce as many opportunities as possible for their children. The quality and the quantity of social networks connect directly with the social position that the family occupies within the class structure. So, this section investigates *social capital* as a resource that different Cypriot families use to secure advantages for their children's prospects. First, the nature of parents' social networks is examined as well as whether their own lives had been influenced - in terms of acquiring their present social position - by the use of their social connections. This is done because it is assumed that when parents' life chances are influenced by the use of social networks, this would inevitably influence the shaping of certain attitudes towards the application of these networks to secure social advantages for the children, the next generation.

8.3.1 The nature of parents' social networks

The family social capital takes a variety of forms and includes various social connections and networks with the extended family, parents' colleagues, personal friends and acquaintances etc. A strategy that many parents adopt is to try and create as many possibilities for using different social networks as possible to promote their interests². One important network is that of the extended family, relatives of some kind. Cypriots are keen to exploit 'relatives', even if they are remotely related to them - or in many cases 'pseudo-relationships' based on '*koumbarata*'³ - to promote their social aims. There is an element of exploitation of the sense of pride that Cypriots have whereby they consider it a duty if they are in a position of influence to help those, who are related to them.

Even though networks based on blood relations are commonly used, the most acknowledged form of effective social networks is that with political parties and politicians in general (clientelism and political patronage). Also, equally effective can be social connections with high government officials or people holding important posts in the economic and social domains. Other sources of social capital can be the Church, trade unions etc.

The nature of the social networks of parents can take the form of horizontal or vertical relationships as described in Chapter 4. Below, I examples of the kinds of networks that parents from the three groups interviewed highlighted as networks that

² A typical example of that is demonstrated in the following incident. Last summer, I visited the Head of Secondary Education at the Ministry of Education in Nicosia because I wanted to talk to him about the issue of *frontisteria*. The secretary, a 50 year old woman, whom I knew well from my earlier visits there, was to make an important telephone call to inform a president of a school committee that their request for an extra teacher had been taken care of. She said to me in friendly, but serious, manner that she would give the news to this person, about whom I got the impression that he was a powerful figure in economic circles, in her own time. She wanted to appear as if she had a role to play in this arrangement and that she was doing them a favour by getting personally involved. She then went on to say

... I will need people like these ... my son comes from abroad from his studies in economics in a short time and I may ask a favour back ...

³ It is a common practice at a Greek-Cypriot wedding for men and women to become *koumbaroi* (literary best men in the case of men and bridesmaids in the case of women) to the newlyweds by offering them a small present (usually money). This is contrary to the mainland Greece practice where the newlyweds have only one *koumbaro* or *koumbara*. This creates a bond of mutual support and acknowledgement of a special relationship between the parties involved. One may make reference to a person by saying 'he is my *koumbaros*' implying a special relationship which creates rights and obligations.

they could associate themselves with are presented briefly although, as will be explained in detail later on, not all parents were equally willing to mobilise their networks to promote their children's interests. More precisely social networks to which parents from the three groups made reference and indicated that they have mobilised and used in the past or that they could potentially use in the future if needed are presented. Table 8.4 shows descriptively the references that the parents made.

Case No	Name of interviewee	Networks they associated themselves with/ having access to
1.	Mrs Dimou, <i>Bank manager</i>	Senior bank officials, political party
2.	Mr and Mrs Yiorgiou, <i>Lawyer, Interior Designer</i>	Law professionals
3.	Mr Paris, <i>Owner of large imports company</i>	Political parties, Senior officials in public and semi-public organisations
4.	Mr Konstantinou, <i>Senior sales manager</i>	Personal acquaintances (<i>he did not specify</i>)
5.	Mr Fotiou, <i>Doctor</i>	Political parties, Senior medical professionals
6.	Mr Loizou, <i>Senior Civil Servant</i>	Speaker of the House of Representatives, Directors in two semi-public organisations
7.	Mr Simou, <i>Deputy Head teacher Sec. School</i>	Friends, acquaintances (<i>he did not specify</i>)
8.	Mr and Mrs Kosta, <i>Senior Civil Servant, Bank clerk</i>	Senior government officials
9.	Mr Nikolaou, <i>Food shop owner</i>	Relatives, friends, acquaintances in some banks
10.	Mr and Mrs Andreou, <i>Petrol shop owner, Bank clerk</i>	Personal connections
11.	Mr Athou, <i>Sales Manager in semi-public org.</i>	Political parties, government officials, friends and acquaintances from business world
12.	Mr Kostaki, <i>Assistant Accountant</i>	He did not associate himself with any kind of networks
13.	Mr and Mrs Sotiriou, <i>Secretary in civil Service, Bank employee</i>	They did not associate themselves with any networks
14.	Mrs Michael, <i>Junior Civil Servant</i>	Church the Archbishop, Politicians. Relatives
15.	Mr Daniel, <i>Technician in Semi-public organisation</i>	Politicians, friends, acquaintances
16.	Mr Christodoulou, <i>Owns furniture workshop</i>	He did not associate himself with any networks
17.	Mrs Antoniou, <i>Housewife</i>	She did not associate her family with any networks
18.	Mrs Teresa, <i>Housewife</i>	Family friends, political connections
19.	Mr Argyrou, <i>Barber</i>	He did not associate with any networks
20.	Mrs Agapiou <i>Housewife</i>	Friends (<i>she did not specify</i>)
21.	Mrs Litsa <i>Hairdresser</i>	Left wing political party
22.	Mr Michalis <i>Traditional confectioner</i>	He did not associate himself with any form of networks
23.	Mr Anastasiou, <i>Factory Worker</i>	Trade union, friends
24.	Mr Apostolou, <i>Office worker</i>	Acquaintances (<i>he did not specify</i>)

Table 8.4: Kinds of parental social networks

The networks presented in Table 8.4 indicate that parents from different social groups have a variety of different networks from where they can draw support. Most PMC parents were specific in their descriptions of their networks, which seem to be of a 'better' quality than the other two groups of parents. Being in the social position

that they were, they would most likely be in an environment from where they could relate to different kinds of social networks. However, the extent to which they were willing to mobilise these networks and the level of confidence about their effectiveness varied across the individual cases and, as is shown later in this chapter, had direct effects on the specific decisions that these families made about their children's future.

The effectiveness of social capital is determined in at least three distinct ways:

- a) Firstly, effectiveness depends on the kind of reciprocities it creates to the parties that engage in this exchange.
- b) Secondly, effectiveness depends on whether it works through direct involvement of the interested individual or through mediators. Mediators play an important role in the process of reaching out to certain networks that could prove beneficial for the promotion of specific interests.
- c) To the above two elements a third one that determines the quality of the social networks should be added. This refers to whether their nature is vertical or horizontal (Putnam, 2000). As was discussed in Chapter 2, vertical networks refer to relations of hierarchy whereas horizontal to relations based on mutual understanding.

The social capital of PMC parents

The nature of the social networks of some *PMC* parents has some interesting characteristics and the way some *PMC* parents talked about them is distinctive. These parents were definite, precise in their descriptions (knowledgeable) and confident. The way they described their social connections showed direct involvement in social networks that would potentially accrue benefits to their families. Six of the eight *PMC* parents spoke about their social connections, which consisted of relationships with people, groups and organisations at high levels whose nature could be characterised as horizontal. These connections accrued from these parents' social and occupational positions or they were actively being built during their careers. Two of the *PMC* parents stated that their personal connections reached up only to a certain level because they did not actively pursue such relationships.

The positions that some *PMC* parents held gave them direct access to certain social networks. Mrs Demou's (*PMC 1*) social networks involved senior bank officials and were the product of her senior position in the administrative hierarchy of the bank in which she worked. Similarly, Mr Kosta (*Senior Civil Servant, PMC 8*) was in a position that offered him the potential of having strong personal connections with people in high government administrative positions as well as in political circles. He himself was a 'provider', a gatekeeper, in a position that gives him the possibility to directly influence appointment to the civil service. On many occasions he found himself on committees that were making appointments in the civil service. Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*) was a senior civil servant too. His social networks were with a political party that had been in government for many years but he also had strong personal connections with high-ranking officials in semi-public organisations.

For some, social networks were an important element of their profession, like Mr Yiorgiou (*lawyer, PMC 2*). Mr Yiorgiou indicated that social networks and connections were the most important elements of his work. When he started his career as lawyer he found difficulties because he lacked the necessary social connections. He noted:

... the profession of lawyer is a matter of social relations... Social connections, networks etc. are the most important things... beyond the typical qualifications it is a matter of social networks... it is a matter of *survival*.

Now, being a successful law professional his networks have expanded within his professional circle. He has managed to do that through conscious work, which included building up social networks. These networks would definitely prove beneficial for his daughter who intended to pursue studies in law. It must be noted that the networks of law professionals in Cyprus do not cover just the law profession but extend into many other fields of social life such as political party politics, local government, sport clubs, big organisations, etc.

Mr Paris (*PMC 3*) a co-owner of a large family-owned imports company spoke very confidently of his social networks as consisting of personal acquaintances in different organisations that could potentially help in securing advantages for his family. He and his family were recipients of other people's claims and representations as their family company was a major employer. From that, one may make the assumption that

he must have collected over time many 'obligation slips' awaiting to be exchanged should the need arise.

Mr Fotiou (*doctor, PMC 5*) spoke of personal social connections with a political party in which he had been an active member (he was a councillor in the local municipal council) and also with medical professionals in the public and private sectors. He was involved in the committee of the local sports club.

The two parents that were not as definite and clear about their social connections, - although both of them stated that they did not lack that resource should a time come when it might be needed - were Mr Konstantinou's (*sales manager, PMC 4*) and Mr Simou's (*assistant head teacher, PMC 7*). Both, spoke of their social networks as consisting of personal relationships and acquaintances. But when Mr Konstantinou was asked to say a few more things about his social networks he stated that he did not belong to any political party, organisation or society that would potentially confer any advantages on him or his family members. Mr Simou, too, when he was encouraged to be more precise about the nature of his social networks stated that his 'friends and acquaintances reached up to a point' implying that they did not reach to high levels and thus, there were limits to the benefits he could secure from his networks.

The social capital of LMC parents

Of the 8 *LMC* parents interviewed, five talked about having access to social networks that could potentially accrue benefits to their children in the future. Their connections involved different kinds of social networks. These parents talked more about relatives, personal connections and acquaintances. The way they referred to social networks revealed more indirect involvement in relation to *PMC* parents. The issue of mediators came up - people who intervene between those who make claims and those who can materialise these claims. In this sense the nature of these relations had a more vertical character. The other three *LMC* parents, however, said that they did not believe that they had the kind of social connections that could prove to be beneficial for their children.

Mr Nikolaou (*LMC 9*) revealed that his networks involved personal connections and acquaintances. He went to say, however, that he could not access political networks:

I do not get mixed up with political parties. I may move through personal contacts or with friends, through relatives. This way. I am not involved with parties ...

He also felt that there were limits to his social connections and associated *mesa* only with political connections.

...*unfortunately* I do not have *mesa*. I do not have the connections with people in high places and this scares me because I will give the values and the education to my children but if the competition later on is not on equal terms then my children will be disadvantaged.

Mr Athou (*LMC* 11) had been involved in local politics in the municipality where he lived. In the past he served as local councillor for a term. He believed that he had made connections and contacts with people in key political positions and thus felt that, should the need arise, he could mobilise them. One interesting element in his description of social networks is that he referred to the role of mediators. Mediators are people who are in a position to forward one's claims to the proper channels. These people may not be providers of favours themselves but they may be seen as such because they are the ones who are seen to materialise one's claims. Mr Athou talked about the issue of reciprocity that emanates from social networks when he referred to people being *ipohreomeni*, literary meaning indebted. People to whom some kind of favour is offered, which creates obligation for this favour to be repaid.

I do have connections. I may not have direct access to a minister, lets say, but I know people who can mediate for my behalf. This can work in this way too, you know. That is, I have someone *ipohreomeno* [indebted to me, owes a favour to me] and that person may be close to a minister, lets say. Well, I could use that person to mediate in order to forward my objectives.

The Church, a powerful source of providing support and forwarding claims, was part Mrs Michael's (*LMC* 14) family social capital. Her family had strong connections with the Church, and in particular the Archbishopric of Cyprus. This was the product of her father being a clergyman. She also talked of social connections with friends, relatives and politicians.

Mr Daniel (*LMC* 15) felt that he had personal social connections and relationships with certain politicians, friends and acquaintances. Mr and Mrs Andreou (*LMC* 10) talked of personal connections with relatives and friends that could be potentially effective.

The following three parents had a different story to tell. Mr Kostaki (*LMC* 12) and Mr Christodoulou (*LMC* 16) said that they did not have access to the kind of networks that could prove to be helpful, should the need arise to help their children. Likewise, Mr and Mrs Sotiriou (*LMC* 13) said that they thought that they did not have the potential to access social networks to promote the interests of their child. Having said this, it must not be assumed that parents who feel that they have no access to the necessary social networks, would definitely not seek to make use of social networks to promote the interests of their children. The fact, however, that they felt that they did not have the necessary connections shapes the way they saw their position in the choice making process.

The social capital of WC parents

The working class parents interviewed revealed that they thought that they were disadvantaged in relation to the possession of this resource. It seemed that these parents' disadvantaged position was not just due to the possession of less financial capital or the possession of 'less' cultural capital as was revealed by the students' practices (participating in cultural activities, owning cultural/educational commodities, literature reading) and by parents' education, involvement and knowledge of the educational system. Working class parents appeared not to have the necessary social connections and networks to assist their children's future plans. This is not to suggest that working class families lack social networks. On the contrary, their networks and connections may be as plentiful and complex as that of parents in any social position. The difference lies in the 'quality' of their social networks and the kind of benefits that these social networks may bestow on them. Most working class parents thought that they did not have the social networks that were necessary for promoting the interests of their children. Of the eight working class parents that were interviewed, five said that they did not think that they had connections with any kind of social networks or with people in powerful positions that would prove to be beneficial to their children's interests. They also appeared to feel very alienated from the process of mobilising social connections to secure advantages for themselves or for their children. What was also apparent was that their knowledge of the processes of applying social networks to secure social advantages was the product of things that they had heard of rather than experienced themselves, directly or indirectly.

The three parents that talked about potentially accessing social networks referred to a political party, a trade union and personal acquaintances. A point that is noteworthy is that these three parents were the WC parents who graduated from some kind of secondary education. This may imply an association of cultural capital with social capital that needs to be explored further in a later section (see Section 9.2.2). Mrs Teresa (*LMC* 18) talked of her family's social networks as consisting of family friends, mostly the product of their association with a political party of which they were members. Mr Anastasiou (*LMC* 23) talked of his association with a particular left wing trade union. This connection was the one that helped him secure his own job two decades before. He also mentioned personal relationships that might be beneficial. Mr Apostolou (*LMC* 24) talked of personal acquaintances with some individuals, whom he thought might be in a position to help, even though he was not sure whether, in the end, they would prove to be effective.

From the presentation of the ways different families associate themselves with various social networks it can be seen that there are different kinds of social relationships with social networks which parents consider as being potentially beneficial for their children. The way parents saw their position within this network of networks and their perceptions of their ability to engage successfully with processes of mobilising such networks successfully for the benefit of their children's prospects connect directly with the kind of educational choices that are made.

8.3.2 Social networks influencing parents' personal lives

After looking at the nature of the parents' social connections which could potentially influence, positively or negatively, the life chances of their children the way social capital has influenced the personal lives of parents and their own life chances are examined. Parents were asked whether their lives were directly or indirectly influenced by the use of social networks.

From the parents' accounts, it appears that nearly half of those interviewed, regardless of their social position, were influenced one way or another by the use of social networks (*mesa*). These were people in positions where social networking could play a part. That is, mostly people who were employees, either in public, semi-

public or even private sectors. Those who worked independently (were self-employed for example) or did not have the opportunities to seek employment in certain sectors often associated with the use of such networks (such as public and semi-public sectors), appeared not to be particularly affected by the use of social networks.

It is assumed that the way social networks have touched people's lives would undoubtedly influence the attitudes towards this 'institution' and their potential use to provide support for the children's future prospects. Also, when the lack of social networks had a negative effect on parents' own life chances it is assumed that this would have an influence on their current attitudes towards this 'institution'.

PMC parents influenced by social networks

Four *PMC* parents' lives were influenced by the use of social networks. When Mrs Demou (*PMC 1*) first joined the bank as a junior employee she said that she did not need to resort to *mesa* for help in getting her job because her credentials for the position for which she applied were more than enough (she was a graduate from the Nicosia English School). However, the second time she applied to rejoin the bank, after she had returned from her studies in England, she faced a completely different situation. Here is how she described the way she rejoined the bank in a higher position.

Basically I was a bit unlucky. Because when I left Cyprus I thought I wouldn't come back to work. But a year after I left, my manager was promoted to director. He appreciated me a lot and when I came one summer I went to visit him. He advised me to make an application shortly before my return and he said that he would help me to rejoin the bank. I made an application in March before but when I came back in September-October, unfortunately he had a heart attack and died and eventually I found difficulties. But fortunately, somebody from the Department, in which I now work, *mediated* and asked specifically for me when he learnt that I went for an interview.

Mr Yiorgiou (*PMC 2*) came back to Cyprus in 1981 after he had studied law in Greece and he opened his own practice. He admitted that he found great many difficulties in establishing himself in the legal world when he started practising law because of his lack of the necessary social connections. The lack of social networks influenced his working life negatively at the beginning of his career.

Mr Konstantinou himself (*PMC 4*) was not influenced by *mesa* but had the following story to tell about his wife.

When my wife and I graduated from England and came back, my wife applied to a semi-public organisation. She went [for an interview] but she received a letter that said: “Unfortunately it is not possible for you to be employed”. After six months my wife was working in a private company and she received a phone call from X organisation - let us not refer to names - “Are you still interested in the position for which you applied six months ago?” She answered “Yes” To cut a long story short, my wife was employed but not to the position for which she applied because that position was the private secretary of the Director. After she had worked there for some time her manager told her clearly that: “You came first, I chose you, but unfortunately you didn’t have *meso*. The other one who graduated from a private school in Nicosia in Cyprus without any other diplomas or anything else was put there by the party”. This is a personal example.

Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*) believes that because he was one of very few candidates that held a post graduate diploma from an English university he managed to be appointed in the civil service. However, he admits that he used some connections he had as a safety precaution to secure his appointment.

Then [when he entered the civil service] definitely you needed to have some kind of *meso* ... I happened to know the then Speaker of Parliament but I believe if I did not have the Masters, if I hadn’t been any good, I wouldn’t have been appointed.

The other four parents did not have personal experiences of social connections facilitating their employment prospects for different reasons. Both Mr Kostas (*PMC 8*) and Mr Fotiou (*PMC 5*) said that they did not have to resort to seeking the help of social connections to secure appointments in the civil service. They both had their studies after they had been given scholarships by the Greek government in fields where there was high demand in the newly formed state (agronomy and medicine). When they came back (early 70s) they were immediately employed.

I remember I came back [after graduating from university] in Cyprus in 1971... end of November and on 6 of December I went to work.

Mr Kostas, *PMC 8*

Mr Simou, (*PMC 7*) was appointed as a secondary school teacher in the mid 70s through an appointment catalogue and thus did not have to resort to the use of social connections. Mr Paris (*PMC 3*) did not have to resort to any kind of social network for another reason. Immediately after returning from his studies in England he joined the family-owned imports company.

LMC parents

Three *LMC* parents’ life chances were influenced by social connections. When Mr Nikolaou (*LMC 9*) was about to make a choice of career he was considering different

options. One was to join his father in his business. Another was to apply for a position at the Department of Customs where there were some vacancies. Here is how he describes it:

If you did not have *meso* you could not enter these sectors [civil service]. Because the competition was extremely intense. I remember that there were positions in the Department of Customs. I satisfied the criteria for applying. But there were 300 candidates for 5 places. You can understand that apart from being excellent you needed someone to push you to get these jobs. In the public and semi-public sectors definitely *mesa* counted a lot ...

Mr Nikolaou (*LMC* 9)

Mrs Michael (*LMC* 14) revealed that her appointment in the civil service had been made possible due to her father's social connections (her father was a priest).

There were 15 women for one position. I had all prerequisites that they were asking for. My father did not want me to go elsewhere. He wanted me to go either to a bank or to the government. I had responses from other departments as well but I chose to come here (...) Yes I have to admit that to get my job I had some references but it was because I had the qualifications as well. (...) Because my father was a priest they helped him from the Archbishopric. But I don't think I caused injustice to others because I had all the qualification that they were asking for.

Mrs Michael (*LMC* 14)

When Mr Daniel (*LMC* 15) joined the semi-public organisation where he is now employed as a technician, he had to take written examinations but 'because *mesa* always played a significant role in this sector' they were necessary for him too. He referred to personal acquaintances who helped him secure his job.

The other *LMC* parents said that social networks and connections did not play a role in them securing their positions. Four associated this with the fact that, at the time they were seeking employment, there were many opportunities. For one other parent (*LMC* 16) it was not necessary because he started working independently. Many attributed their employment to luck and thought that in today's competitive labour environment where *mesa* appear to play a dominant role they would not stand a chance.

Mrs Andreou (*LMC* 10) said that when she was employed in a bank she was surprised because she had no *mesa*.

Mrs Andreou: To be honest I did not expect to be employed in a bank because things were difficult but then *Ethniki* [a Greek bank] came to Cyprus and there were examinations. The first examinations took place in 1969. I went, I passed and I was employed. These were the first examinations for hiring personnel because until then people were been employed through connections and acquaintances. These positions, because they were the first examinations - and I am not saying this because I was in - were made with no *mesa*. They were only

based on the examination results. From 500 candidates 20 were employed. After that of course ...

Inter.: What happened?

Mrs Andreou: *Mesa* came. There were examinations of course and people were employed with examinations but many more were also employed with *mesa*. Through the back door or back window.

Mr Athou (*LMC 11*) appeared not to have been directly influenced by the use of *mesa* because as he suggested that when he applied for his job in the late 70s there were many opportunities for employment in the semi public organisation in which he worked. He recalls that during the late 70s, to get a job in semi-public organisations did not require the use of social connections compared with the present time when it appears to be the determining factor.

Then it was easier. It is not like today where you need Gods, Demons and *mesa* to get in. Basically it was much easier... You needed *mesa* then too, but it was not like it is today.

Mr Athou (*LMC 11*)

Mr Kostaki (*LMC 12*) was employed in a semi-public organisation immediately after the events of 1974 when the position for which he had applied (low paid warehouse worker) was not particularly attractive. Gradually, after succeeding in some external examinations in accountancy (Higher diploma), he managed to become assistant accountant. He made this interesting comment:

If I went now for that job, because I do not have any *mesa*, it is unlikely that I would get it.

Mrs Sotiriou (*LMC 13*) said that she joined the civil service in 1972 as a clerk without the help of any form of social networks.

I've applied everywhere and I was appointed in the Department of Social Security ... coincidentally I believe. Then it wasn't as hard as it is today. There were many positions in the civil service and the private sector too.(...) I preferred the public sector because of its benefits even though the wages then were lower than in the private sector.

Finally, for Mr Christodoulou (*LMC 16*) *mesa* did not play a part in his finding a job because he opened his own furniture workshop early on and he was working independently.

WC parents

Most working class parents were not in a position to associate themselves with effective social networks and their lives were barely or not at all affected by social

networks. Of the working class parents interviewed only two referred to the fact that their lives had been influenced by *mesa*.

Mrs Teresa (WC 18) reported that she managed to get a job in the municipality of her area as an assistant in a nursery school through family connections with people in the municipality. 'That [*meso*] was the only prerequisite' she said. Also, Mr Anastasiou (WC 23) managed to secure his job in a soft drinks factory because of his connections with a certain trade union.

For the other working class parents, social connections of any kind did not appear to play any part in their lives regarding securing employment. For many it was not even an option. When Mrs Antoniou (WC 17) was asked whether *mesa* influenced her life chances at any point she replied

Always those who are more powerful felt that they had *mesa* by their side. I didn't have any kind of *meso* ever ... I just went for some time to work [in a factory] after the schools closed for the summer vacations and I stayed there.

Basically *mesa* did not affect Mrs Antoniou's life chances because, like other working class parents, she did not seek to make use of them at any point. But she gives the impression that she did not have the kind of social connections that would play a positive role. Similar stories were those of: a) Mr Argyrou (WC 19) who became a barber from a very young age and did not have to resort to any kind of social networks. He, like Mrs Antoniou, felt that he lacked the social connections because he did not engage with political parties, organisations etc. b) Mrs Agapiou (WC 20) who worked in a factory for a few years, c) Mr Michalis (WC 22) and d) Mr Apostolou (WC 24). Basically what was common about the description that these parents gave was that *mesa* were not 'for them'. According to them it was for people who could get access to power centres.

Mrs Litsa (WC 21) had a different story to tell. A different kind of social network helped her start her own salon. She became a hairdresser from a young age and some female customers helped her secure a bank loan of £500 to set up her business.

There are a number of remarks that arise from the parents' accounts. It appears that most parents associate the resort to social networks and connections (*mesa*) with the demand in the labour market. The tighter the labour market the more intensely the

use of social connections appears to be taking place. The lives of more PMC and LMC parents appear to have been influenced more by the use of social networks. This relates to two reasons. One is because the nature of middle class networks was of better 'quality'. The other reason relates to the fact that the middle class parents were aiming for middle class positions, which were in demand, and thus they required the application of social networks to overcome the selection processes. For many working class parents, resorting to social networks was not an option, probably because in many cases they did not have the minimum qualifications (e.g. a secondary school leaving certificate) to support a white-collar job aspiration.

8.3.3 Parents' attitudes and beliefs towards the mobilisation of social networks to achieve social goals

Based on the attitudes and beliefs that parents expressed, they could be positioned on a continuum with, on the one end, those who view it as an acceptable practice, a procedure to which there is no alternative, and on the other end those who see it as a totally unacceptable and corrupt method to promote social interests.

The potential to access social networks to secure advantages does not automatically imply that these parents would resort to this potential despite its availability. A point needs to be made here. The parents who may have the opportunity to mobilise social networks to secure social advantages may opt not resort to them for the following reason. On many occasions the use of social connections entails the creation of different kinds of obligations that many parents may not be willing to create. The other reason for some parents not being willing to resort to social networks is because they appear to totally disagree with such practices. Others, however, do not endorse the use of such practices simply because they lack the potential to successfully engage in these processes. It has to be said that the parents who found the use of social networks to promote social objectives as not acceptable were the minority in the sample interviewed. Most indicated that they thought it was a practice that was a reality for the Cypriot social setting and all had to live with it and attempt to make the most of it. In other words most adopted a pragmatic perspective when looking at this issue.

Parents who view it as unacceptable

Mrs Demou (PMC 1) clearly felt that this situation was not acceptable and it created problems

...look, for a bank this [using mesa] is not good because you get people who are often incompetent to occupy positions that require very competent people...

but she acknowledged the feeling that is present among many people:

People may be angry or disappointed with the whole situation but in the end they remain passive because they feel that since they are secure they are not directly threatened by the situation so they do not react... When it comes to children it is something that troubles all of us but what can we do? Everybody says “*OK I will secure my child* [help my child get to a secure position] *one way or another*”

Mr Kosta (PMC 8) also disapproved of the use of such networks because he too thought that it often meant that not so competent people were appointed to responsible positions (see extract on pages 221-2) Due to his position, his department was pressured to produce the expected amount of work even though there was a shortage of staff. So he needed very competent people in place.

Mr and Mrs Soteriou (PMC 13) said that they were against such practices and that they did not want to have anything to do with such practices. Mr Litsa (WC 21) felt very frustrated about this situation.

Because I see that my daughter sees all these things, the injustice ... and she gets very upset, and I can't help her. When she sees all this from her adolescence how will she move on?

Mr Apostolou (WC 24) felt that this was a general sign of modern times when people want to have maximum gains with minimum effort. That is how he explained the fact that people sought more to make use of social connections rather than strive to achieve a goal through effort.

Parents who view it as an acceptable procedure

Most of the parents talked about the use of social networks as being an established ‘institution’ that cannot be easily changed. ‘It is a necessary evil’ a few said and explained this characterisation by referring to the fact that it was the outcome of the fact that too many young people were moving to higher education and were gaining qualifications. By having too many young people with higher qualifications, this reasoning maintains, the use of social networks has emerged as an ‘appropriate’ selection mechanism for selective social positions, as often candidates have similar

qualifications. The use of this institution over the past three or four decades has shown to many that this is an effective way to achieve social objectives. Furthermore, its widespread application, and the fact that this process involves many people and institutions in high social positions has established this practice as a legitimate way of pursuing social goals. Many of the parents interviewed who saw this practice as ‘logical’ or ‘natural’, could not see an alternative to this selection mechanism especially in a small society such as Cyprus where on many occasions networks are personalised. For example Mr Yiorgiou (*PMC 2*) considered the use of social connections as inevitable. He argued:

Mesa are not right of course but it a *natural consequence*, especially in Cyprus which is a small place... even if they bring laws, regulations I think it is very difficult to uproot it completely...

Similarly, Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*), although acknowledging that the use of social connections was not promoting meritocracy, he believed that it was something all parents inevitably had to face. He felt that, because every parent wanted to secure their child’s future it was natural to resort to their social connections to try and help them. He felt that this was something that all parents were doing and if one was not willing to do it, then this would deprive children of the chance to secure a better future.

Mr Paris (*PMC 3*) thought that the use of social networks and acquaintances was ‘logical’, particularly when people with similar qualifications competed for similar positions. The logic, according to this reasoning, lies in the fact that social networks on occasions when people have identical qualifications becomes the distinguishing characteristic among candidates who compete for the same social positions.

... that [the use of *mesa*] is logical. When you get to a point when you want to select from a small group of people who have identical qualifications then you get the element of acquaintances. It’s logical.

Similarly, Mr Kostaki (*LMC 12*) believed that because the people who apply for some positions have equal qualifications some kind of selection needs to take place. That is when *meso* intervenes. It is a ‘necessary evil’ according to him. Mrs Michael (*LMC 14*) believed that appointments to prestigious positions required the help of social connections, particularly with politicians. She saw this institution getting stronger and believed it would continue to grow stronger because ‘we are a small society’ and ‘we all run to the politicians’. She further felt that it was an acceptable

practice, a 'necessary evil' because of the competition for the prestigious positions in society. She believed that 'without mesa you [individuals] cannot get anywhere'.

Mrs Antoniou (*WC 17*), at first during the interview, gave the impression that she thought that the use of mesa and favouritism was a problem

You go to an insurance company ... the one that my husband uses ... and you see that older employees that are there ... young people may seek employment but they take their children, their relatives ... and you see a young girl even though a good student is being left out.

She later, however, gave a very different answer to the question of the use of political party networks in promoting one's interests. The following extract from the interview is very revealing of her beliefs about the use of social networks. She was asked about the obligations that are created when politicians and political parties provide 'services'.

Mrs Antoniou: Yes, why not. When a party helps you, why not? Why support a party that does not help me at all. Because my husband is self employed and you know what it is like ... or I don't know if you know what it is like, pay all the bills the taxes the national insurance and support a five-member family ... I don't work ... if a party helps you, with pleasure, why not?

Inter.: Does this support the system?

Mrs Antoniou: That's right, it does.

Inter.: Does this worry you in any way?

Mrs Antoniou: No it doesn't. Why should it?

Inter.: Because you have children that one day may seek employment.

Mrs Antoniou: Any kind of help not just for my children. Since I need help and someone will help me why not help that person in turn? ... I do not know if what I am saying is right or wrong but ...

Mr Konstantinou (*PMC 4*) appeared to view the use of *mesa* as the product of the clientelistic relationships that the political parties have created with their supporters. He did not believe that other kinds of social networks were particularly effective.

Mr Simou (*PMC 7*) also saw the use of social networks as a situation that developed over time and it was a reality in society. Being a reality, people, and particularly parents, ought to try and cope with it any way they could. Likewise, Mr Nikolaou (*LMC 9*) commented:

... we see this thing [the use of social networks] as a fact. That is the way things are.

Mr and Mrs Andreou (*LMC 10*) felt that the use of social networks was something that everybody did and not resorting to it would definitely disadvantage the children. They also saw it as something that suited both those who provided 'services' and

those who sought the advantages it offered. As a result they believed that it would always be present in the Cypriot society.

It is very tempting when somebody has the power to help his own people. No matter how much we want to say that it was not happening, unfortunately it does and it always will. No matter who is in power that thing will always continue. It suits everybody.

Mrs Andreou (*LMC* 10)

Mr Athou (*LMC* 11) equally regarded the use of social networks to promote social objectives as ‘something that everybody did.’ As such, he saw it as a social given which was preserved mostly by politicians as a way to relate with their electorate in the sense that it was being used as a pay-back for the support they were receiving.

Mrs Teresa (*WC* 18) believed that the use of *mesa* would always be there because it is a natural consequence of how things are. Mr Argyrou (*WC* 19), too, saw the use of social networks as a social given when he said that ‘*mesa* were and are here for life’. Most *WC* parents seemed to regard the use of social networks to achieve social goals as a social given and as such they accepted that it would not change. Furthermore, they did not appear critical of it. When they were talking about it they used expressions such as ‘it is in our blood’, ‘that is the way things are’, ‘that is the way we do things’ or ‘everybody learnt this way’ etc.

As has been shown in this section, most contemporary Cypriot families seem to recognise the value of social capital, in the form of social connections with networks and power centres, in promoting social objectives and in particular the interests of young individuals. Many parents’ lives have been influenced positively or negatively by social capital. Positively, in the sense that it allowed some parents in the past to gain some sort of advantage in reaching their current social position. These parents were mostly professional middle class and, to a lesser degree, lower middle class. Negatively, in the sense that its absence deprived some of them of the possibility to compete for accessing social ‘goods’. The nature of social networks varies according to the parents’ social position. *PMC* parents appear to have better ‘quality’ social networks and thus are in a better position to potentially use them effectively for their families’ benefit. Two distinctive attitudes relating to the use of social networks seem to be present among contemporary Cypriots. One, which regards the use of social networks as an unacceptable practice and another, which is more prevalent, which regards the use of social networks as a pragmatic practice that has to be adopted if

one wants to promote his/her interests effectively. The latter attitude undoubtedly favours those middle classes who have the potential to access and mobilise more effective social networks. Working class acceptance that the mobilisation of social networks is an acceptable way to pursue social objectives should be recognised as a position that offers legitimisation of an unfair process that favours an already privileged section of the Cypriot society.

8.4 *Social capital* shaping familial *habitus* towards choice making

The *habitus* represents a set of predispositions to thinking and behaving in certain ways that individuals develop as a result of their lived experiences. *Habitus* can be understood in the context of a particular set of social relations or, as Bourdieu calls it, a field of relations. In the case of the present study familial *habitus* developing in the field of choice making in education and in particular for choices relating to post secondary school destinations is referred to. The family habitus is structured, among other things, by the social class of the family, the family biography, history and geography and generates a range of choices, which include the possibility to ‘invest’ the capital that is available to the family. Though structured, habitus is also constituted through a dynamic process of restructuring as a result of the changing environments within which it is located. The habitus allows for different strategies to be developed which can influence an individual’s trajectory and significantly determine the course of his/her future. The environments in which the family is located generates different ranges of strategies and shapes possible chances of success. The availability (or unavailability) of different resources constitutes part of the environment, which structures the family habitus. In this section in particular, the relationship that exists between the availability of social capital and habitus is discussed.

Accounts of the *habitus* present in the family would include:

- Parents’ understanding of their present circumstances and the current state of social networks in Cyprus
- Parents’ willingness to make use of social networks for providing opportunities for their children

- Strategies to cope with the availability/unavailability of social capital
- Expectations for the future

One issue that needs to be clarified is at which point social networks and connections become effective social capital. As was shown in the previous section, many parents indicated that they thought that they had social connections with various networks that could prove beneficial for their children's future. As can be seen in this section, however, not all parents were willing to resort to these connections to secure advantages for their children and, in particular, to offer them opportunities for future employment. The question that needs to be addressed is: To what extent do social connections and networks become social capital if there is no intention for it to be used to secure social profits? Social connections and networks are an effective form of social capital when there is willingness to mobilise them to secure advantages. Otherwise their usefulness becomes limited. Having said this, it can be argued that some benefits may be drawn from them, in the sense that potential access to such capital allows the possessors to develop a sense of confidence that in their pursuit of social objectives, they have the possibility to draw help from this source, even if, at present, they plan not to resort to it. Social capital, in other words, shapes a *habitus* of 'insurance'. An analogy to the above could be with someone having money in the bank but not intending to use this money to materialise an objective. The money which is there offers a sense of security, a cushion against risk ahead, that should the need arise could become useful. While there is no intention to be used/invested it constitutes a dormant form of capital or a capital not exploited to its full potential.

The availability of social connections and networks with key individuals, groups and organisations, and, most importantly, the existence of intention to use them, shapes a familial *habitus* that allows secondary school students and their families to make choices that aim to realise higher social objectives. The 'quality' and 'quantity' of social capital also plays a determining role in the shaping of *habitus*. The 'quality' of social capital refers to the nature of social networks which, as was discussed previously, could be vertical or horizontal. Parents from different social classes seem to have different kinds of habituses and this appears to be the product of the fact that the kind of social capital that can potentially confer advantages on children in the future seems to be differentially distributed among the different social classes. The family *habitus* influences the shaping of different strategies for making the possible

choices for the future. Relevant to that is the shaping of the expectations that parents have for their children's future. The strategies that families adopt are influenced by the availability of other forms of capitals in the family particularly financial capital but also cultural capital.

8.4.1 Parents' understanding of their present circumstances in relation to the current state of social networks in Cyprus

The parents' descriptions of the way they saw themselves in relation to the way social networks currently operating in Cyprus revealed different sorts of parental understandings of this institution. This relates directly to the parents' own experiences of the issue as described above and also to the kind of social networks they felt that they could potentially access and mobilise to secure advantages for their children.

Parents were asked to talk about the way they thought the institution of *mesa* was developing over time. That is, if they thought that it was strengthening or weakening. It seems that the comments made in Chapter 4, that an ethos has been developed in the Cypriot society referring to the use of *mesa* for achieving social aims, in the case of the present study, the materialisation of the occupational aspirations of students, is confirmed. This ethos seems to be an integral part of the familial habitus that shapes the strategies for choosing future destinations.

PMC parents

All *PMC* parents appeared to be well informed about particular circumstances surrounding the effective use of social connections to achieve social goals. Many referred to their experiences from their working environments.

Mrs Demou (*PMC 1*) seemed very knowledgeable about how the system of social networks worked, particularly in the banking sector where she worked. Because of her high ranking position and her experiences, she had first hand knowledge of the way things were developing. According to her, things were getting worse because of the fact that there was too much competition for few prestigious places. Mrs Demou indicated that in the banking sector, the use of social networks to enter a bank was so intense that 'unfortunately they [candidates] step over dead bodies'. She also stated

that there was an inter-link between high positions in the banking sector and politicians. She argued that politicians had the power and the means to interfere in employment and promotion processes, despite the fact that banks were supposed to be an independent sector.

Similarly, Mr Kosta (*PMC 8*) was in an extremely effective position to know exactly how social networks worked in the civil service since he was directly involved in these processes. He talked very vividly about how this process applied, especially in the public and semi-public sectors where he had first hand knowledge.

Something else, which favours this situation [the use of *mesa*]...up until now there were only oral examinations. Oral examinations is what we say in Cyprus “*pinei nero*” [leaks water, meaning they are not transparent] It is not objective. We give one question to one candidate and a different one to another. With written examinations the same items apply to all candidates. What is written stays and can be re-examined and it is difficult for *mesa* to interfere. Now, some organisations have only oral examinations but in some semi-public organisations the trend is to have both written and oral examinations. Many have now realised that through written examinations interference can be limited and those who have to make the decisions will have a good excuse not to satisfy those who exercise pressure on them.

Mr Kosta (*PMC 8*)

Even though he believes the use of social networks is strengthening he feels that at some point society's need for progress and modernisation will enforce more meritocratic processes. These processes as his last comment reveals will resist the promotion of clientistic social capital.

Because this institution [the use of social connections] goes for the worst and you see that some positions are occupied by people that are not really capable of carrying out the duties that they are supposed to, you can see that ... I talk about the civil service now ... on the one hand you see that people are employed who can not fulfil the duties of that position, on the other hand you see that huge amounts are spent on the wages and people that are there do not live up to the responsibilities of that position. That means you need to employ others so that you can cope ... people have started now to realise that many mistakes have been made in the past and that there is pressure to restrain the state expenditures... so appointments need to be made with more meritocratic criteria. Meritocracy is coming back I believe (...) We are moving towards more meritocratic procedures. Because when the Ministry of Finance says that out of 50 places that are going to be vacant only 10 will be filled and that they should be forced to produce the same amount of work and when you have people outside demanding to be served, you have to get those employees to produce what you expect them to produce. We live in a pluralistic society where everybody has demands. The time when the civil servant was unquestioned has gone ... when his word was intimidating and the villagers were afraid of him. Today people go into the offices and they shout, they demand. People have woken up. They do not consider the civil servants as “masters”. They demand to be served because they pay them through taxes.

Mr Kosta (*PMC 8*)

Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*), like Mr Kosta, due to his position had a very clear understanding of what goes on in terms of how social networks works in the civil service. He described how people using social networks were bypassing legislation and had entered the civil service first as daily-paid stuff and then gradually having their posts made permanent. He also described how the processes of using social networks were transforming. Rather than weakening, they were getting stronger moving to a more refined process whereby they were being applied at higher levels of selection processes among candidates who might have similar qualifications.

Mr Yiorgiou (*PMC 2*) saw resorting to social connections and networks as a consequence of the competition that existed among many graduates for a few prestigious places in the public, semi-public, banking and other big financial organisations. He attributed this competition to the general desire that prevailed among more and more young people to get a higher degree. Like many other parents he believed that for social connections to be successful they needed to be supported by ‘good’ qualifications (i.e. a degree from a prestigious university).

Among most PMC parents it seems that there was a consensus and most seemed to be making a similar argument which referred to the relationship between the labour market’s demand and the oversupply of young graduates which made the use of social connections a requirement in the selection processes. Obviously the families who could support their younger member with better quality social capital would be better placed to cope with the demands of such an environment. Briefly, what other PMC parents argued on the issue was as follows.

Mr Konstantinou (*PMC 4*) and Mr Fotiou (*PMC 5*) attributed the use of social connections to the fact that there are too many graduates competing for few prestigious positions. Both appeared to have a very clear and strong understanding of how social connections work. They, too, like Mr Yiorgiou believed that the use of social networks was intensifying because politicians and political parties were directly involved in many aspects of social life and saw *mesa* as a commodity that could be offered as a means for getting support from the general electorate.

Mr Simou (*PMC 7*) believed that the use of social networks over the past three decades has changed. Even though he believed that three decades ago, there were

more jobs available, the use of social networks and *mesa* was done rather crudely. At present, he saw the labour market as being tight, in the sense that there were fewer positions available, especially for young graduates. The use of *mesa* has changed in that they have adjusted to the new conditions which include the introduction of some procedures such as examinations in some organisations (civil service, semi-public organisations, banks etc.). ‘To use your *mesa* you have to succeed at least in these examinations’. To that extent he felt that things were improving. He further felt that the most effective way that they worked was through family and personal connections.

LMC parents

Most *LMC* parents seemed too to have a sound understanding of the current state of the use of social connections to promote occupational objectives. They appeared to have less direct involvement in processes involving their use compared with some *PMC* parents.

Mr Nikolaou (*LMC* 9) had the view that the use of social networks to achieve social goals was getting stronger:

I think it is strengthening because everybody started to have more connections with MP’s etc. Everybody has *mesa*. But whoever has the more effective ones, achieves his aims... OK everybody says that *rusfeti* ought to stop. But, hold on, if everybody wants to “accommodate” their own how will it stop? (...)
Everybody in end is helped or hopes to be helped by some kind of *mesa*, because everybody somewhere has an acquaintance and they hope that when their turn comes they will be helped. You have the case when someone is obviously wrongly treated [because he lacks *mesa*]. He starts reacting and so they may satisfy him to keep him quiet so he does not cause mass reaction.

Mr Nikolaou (*LMC* 9)

Mr and Mrs Andreou (*LMC* 10) believed that *mesa* were being more effective especially when politicians intervened. They felt that politicians had the power to intervene everywhere, in many sectors. Mrs Andreou (*LMC* 10) like Mrs Demou (*PMC* 1) talked particularly of the banking sector and said that although in the past the people who were influential were influential clients, etc., nowadays it was the politicians who intervened to promote the interests of individuals, despite the fact that the banking sector was independent of the political/party sphere.

Mr Athou (*LMC* 11) seemed to be very familiar with how things worked with *mesa*. He had first hand experience from his job where he said he saw them in action frequently. He too, attributed the use of *mesa* to the tightness of the labour market.

He believed that they were promoted by politicians in power and also from other sources of power, like the Church. He had this interesting incident to relate when his department required for two seasonal workers.

We asked for two seasonal workers in April before high season began... we waited during May, June, July... September... nothing. Early in October when we were laying off our seasonal workers two people came with a *firmani* [directive] from the Archbishopric. What could we do? Not only did they stay but gradually they became permanent staff.

Mr Athou (LMC 11)

He also referred to people using connections that derived from kinship, friendship, economic relations etc. People, according to Mr Athou, try to mobilise any kind of connection to promote their interests. He further felt that things would get worse as more people with qualifications would be competing for a few prestigious positions.

Mr Daniel (LMC 15) believed that the institution of using *mesa* was strengthening although he saw that certain efforts were being made to restrain the situation with the introduction of objective procedures such as written examinations etc. He further thought that people did not react to the situation because they were anticipating that they would be helped at some point. He said

We react when we are left out (*laughs*) when we are among those who benefit from it we keep quiet ... and you know with one way or another all have benefited from this situation, so ...And its the other thing as well you know. Our society is small, if I react to it my reaction will be seen as directed to certain people, it becomes personal, [Cyprus] is not the big impersonal society where you don't know the other people. So, sometimes people choose not to react because they know the people who might have benefited.

Mr Daniel (LMC 15)

Like most parents Mr Kostaki (LMC 12) and Mr Christodoulou (LMC 16) saw the current state of *mesa* as strengthening because of the value that people attach to some prestigious positions, especially in the public and semi-public sector. Mr Kostaki (LMC 12) said that he had first hand knowledge of *mesa* in use as he had been in a semi-public organisation for many years.

Mrs Sotiriou (LMC 13) when asked about how she viewed the current state of *mesa*, replied that she did not want to believe that *mesa* were so dominant in the labour market.

I don't know ... I hear a lot of things ... I hope things are not as some people describe them...I hear of terrible things and I am a bit cautious of what to believe ... I hear of things such as *mesa* intervening everywhere, but I've always been cautious. I hope things are not as people describe them.

Mrs Sotiriou (LMC 13)

WC parents

The WC parents interviewed seemed to have the conviction the *mesa* were present in every sphere of social life and most saw themselves as being left outside these processes and felt that they and their families were being disadvantaged and helpless as a result. Because their knowledge was from things that they have heard rather than from first hand knowledge, many seemed to exaggerate when they talked about the power that social connections might have, thus revealing an insidious fatalism. The following extracts are indicative of that fact.

Mrs Antoniou (WC 17) believed that ‘Mesa are above everything else’ and that ‘If you do not have meso, you do nothing’. She talked of the use of mesa as extending to all aspects of social life and felt that she and her family were disadvantaged by the fact that they did not have the possibility to mobilise such connections. She thought that *mesa* were used everywhere even in employment offices ‘Even there [employment offices] there are *mesa*. They would help their own first’ and she thought that they could not rely on them to help in finding employment for her daughter. ‘It’s better to get a newspaper find telephones there and look on your own.’

Mrs Teresa (WC 18) was one the two WC parents interviewed who had been helped to secure employment through the use of social connections. She believed that the use of *mesa* would always be above everything else and that it would not change, no matter what different people might do. She saw them working more through personal connections rather than through political connections.

Mr Argyrou (WC 19) believed that those who had access to social connections and networks through political parties and organisations always got the better jobs and lived ‘on the shoulders’ of poor people who were ‘*poukato*’ (at the bottom). He further believed that ‘either it is X or Y [Cypriot presidents] ... they are all the same. They all want to accommodate their own. And it will always be like this regardless of who is in power’. He also added that ‘everybody learnt that this is the way to do things’ (Mr Argyrou, WC 19).

One parent in this group who made some very noteworthy comments on how she viewed her family’s present circumstances in relation to the current state of social

networks was Mrs Litsa (WC 21). She had the following very interesting comments to make in which there is a strong feeling of helplessness.

Today, if you don't have meso, you cannot get a job. We all want to educate our children but from then on it depends on your circle. Those who haven't got the circle to help them they don't have a chance of a good job.

When she talked about her daughter she had these bitter words to say about the fact that they were always disadvantaged and she sensed that their disadvantage would be passed on to her children too. Here is how she vividly described their circumstances.

If she [her daughter] does not succeed in becoming a teacher she will not get a job in the government. Because we have nobody to help her. Unfortunately we were always unlucky. Since the day we were born. My husband graduated from technical school because my father-in-law was poor and could not afford to send him anywhere else. His age peers are now doctors etc. and their children are obviously in a better position. Because then if they were graduating from a school, a university there were positions to go to. Now, they have somewhere to put their children. Us, we have nowhere to put them to help them. And he got a job with his father to help his sisters build houses. (...)

Because, more and more graduates from schools, universities and those who managed to enter an organisation, in a bank, their children have an advantage compared to our children. Without having someone saying openly that you need *meso*, there is *meso*. Because I was poor and my parents did not let me graduate from secondary school and I did not get the job that I wanted in the government, in an organisation, now my family is in a disadvantaged position. And you see everywhere that things are not fair. Because when two children are the same, have the same qualifications who are they going to take? The daughter of the hairdresser? No. They will take the one who has help from somewhere. Not to mention that sometimes only by having a name you can be helped.

Mrs Litsa (WC 21)

The analysis of the parents' interviews reveals that parents from different social class positions have distinct understandings of their present circumstances in relation to the current state of social networks in Cyprus. The way parents perceive the current state of social networks in Cyprus and themselves in this network or relations shapes a distinctive *habitus* about their potential in effectively mobilising social networks for the benefit of their children. *PMC* parents appear to be directly involved in social networks, to have first hand experiences of the way they operate to confer advantages and to know details of processes by which people may effectively mobilise their social connections. *LMC* parents appear to be less directly involved in social networks but they seem to have a clear understanding of the development of the institution of mobilising social networks and its current state. Some see mediators as a way of accessing social networks. Most *WC* parents' information about the way social networks operate appear to come from things that they have heard of, rather

that from personal experiences. This often results in them making claims such as '*mesa are everywhere*' or '*you cannot do anything, without mesa*' etc. and to express some strong feelings of helplessness as they see that they would not be in a position to access successfully social networks to promote the interests of their families.

All parents appear to relate the use of social connections to promote social objectives with the tightness of the labour market and the fact that vacancies in what they regard as prestigious positions are limited.

8.4.2 Parents' willingness to make use of social networks

The way parents felt about the use of social networks to achieve social goals (see Section 8.2.3) seems to determine, to a large extent, their willingness to mobilise them or not. There were parents who viewed the use of social networks and connections to promote social objectives, and in particular to provide opportunities for children, as a process that was undermining the essence of the notion of meritocracy because this form of social capital was unequally distributed among the different social classes. However, despite the fact that many were critical of these practices many parents saw that if they did not invest in this form of social capital their children might be disadvantaged and so they were determined to resort to it and mobilise it. Some parents, even though they might have the potential to use effective social networks, were choosing not to do so because they thought that it was an inappropriate way to pursue social objectives. Moreover, there were other parents who may not have been particularly against/critical of this institution but they were not in a position to provide that resource for their children. So, in other words, one may distinguish roughly two different models of the use of social connections and networks, graphically presented in Figure 8.1. These two 'models' connect to issues of modernist and traditional perspectives of viewing social processes. The four categories presented in Figure 8.1 derive from analysis of data from the interviews. It has to be said that certain parents did not fall into a clear-cut category as they indicated, for example, that they were not planning to resort to the use of social networks, which they may have thought as an unacceptable way to pursue social objectives, but they were not sure whether they would 'stick' to that principle when faced with the '*cruel reality*' as one parent commented.

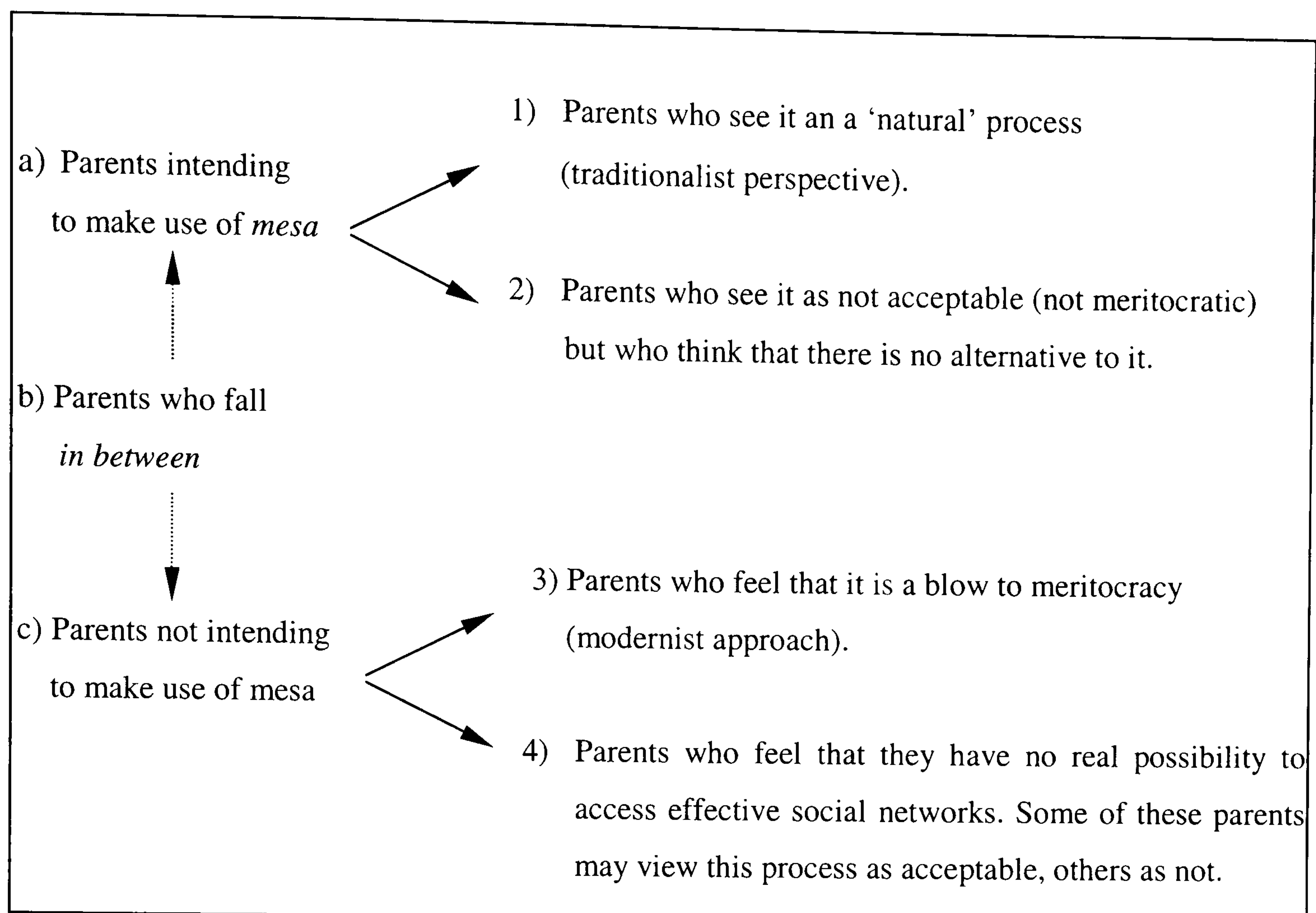


Figure 8.1: Parents intent to mobilise social networks (*mesa*)

Parents not willing to make use of social networks

As indicated above there were at least two kinds of parents not willing to resort to the use of social networks: those who could potentially make use of them but chose not to for various reasons and those who said that they were not willing to resort to them, primarily because they felt that they did not have the potential to access useful social networks. Effectively, the latter, mostly working class parents and some lower middle class, were not expressing a genuine choice because in reality they had none.

Mrs Demou (*PMC 1*) was in the first category as she clearly stated that they were not willing to resort to social networks to help her son in getting employment despite the fact that they could potentially access effective social networks.

We made it clear to him that whatever job he decides to do either on his own or to an organisation we will not be prepared to go and ask, “beg” anybody so that he is employed... [by getting the best credentials] the important thing is that he will feel capable to overcome ‘*athemito*’[unlawful] competition.... because, to tell you the truth, because he himself wouldn’t want us to beg he may not even come back to work in Cyprus after his studies.

Mrs Demou was able to seek the best possible credentials for her son (by sending him to a British University). She did so in the hope that his prestigious credentials would not need the support of social connections to produce social success.

Mr Kosta (*PMC 8*), like Mrs Demou, was not willing to resort to *mesa* to help his daughter even though he too, admitted having effective social connections. This attitude directly links with his views on the issue (see previous section) where he clearly saw this institution as anachronistic and something that was holding progress back (adoption of a modernist attitude). The choices that both his daughters made related to school teaching, a profession that does not require the support of any kind of social connections since appointments are made through a catalogue of appointees.

Another parent whose children chose to aim for the teaching profession was Mr Simou (*PMC 7*). He too, appeared unwilling to use social connections to help his children. For this reason, according to him, he directed his children to primary school teaching, a job that did not require the use of social connections. However, he indicated that he might resort to social networks under some circumstances. When asked if he would use his social networks should the occasion arise to help his son he responded:

As I told you earlier I wouldn't want to. But if I get to a position to do it to ask somebody to mediate for my son it would be very helpful. But I will not seek to make any use ... I will not try ... We definitely need friends, acquaintances at some point but up to a degree. You must, of course, have the necessary qualifications. That is you can't ask somebody to help your child without having these qualifications. When you are at a position when you are among people with similar or equal qualifications then OK somebody must be chosen. They will mediate for me ... since somebody else will mediate for the other candidates ... and who ever succeeds. That's the difference. At that point I may be forced to do it. But no more than that.

Mr Simou (*PMC 7*).

It appears that rather than being 'forced' to make use of social connections, he preferred his son to follow a 'modest' occupation as he put it. 'My children *adikounde* [do not get what they deserve, being high achievers at school] by choosing to follow school teaching' he said. This was probably because his connections were not of the quality that would prove to be effective should they have aimed for higher professional studies. He admitted it himself when he said that his connections 'reached, ... up to a point'. So, although he might be willing to use social connections under some circumstances, the fact that his children opted to make choices that do not require *mesa* could be interpreted as an indication of acknowledging the limitation of his social networks.

Mr Fotiou (*PMC 5*) appeared not to be willing to mobilise his social networks for another reason. He saw that his daughter's plans to pursue English literature with intention to teach did not require their application.

The following parents indicated that they would not resort to the use of social networks because they, like Mr Simou, felt that they did not have the kind of networks that could prove to be effective. Mr Konstantinou (*PMC 4*) appeared not to be willing to make use of social connections, which as he admitted were not of the kind that would provide his child with the necessary support. As a result he was trying to direct his daughter to a profession (accountancy) that he thought would not require social networks. This was because he anticipated that the demand for that job would grow, making the competition for employment less intense. Once more one can see the clear association that is made between the demand in the labour market and the need to use social connections to overcome competition.

Mr and Mrs Sotiriou (*LMC 13*) made it clear that they would not resort to the use of *mesa* to help their son. Mrs Sotiriou said:

I don't think that we have the ability to access social networks. We are not the kind of people who would use *mesa*. And deep inside we do not like this situation.

Similarly Mr Kostaki (*LMC 12*) said that because he did not feel that he had any *mesa* he thought that it was unlikely to resort to them to help his daughter.

Amongst the WC parents, three thought that it was highly unlikely that they would resort to the use of social connections, primarily because they thought they did not have access to the kind of social networks needed. In particular Mr Argyrou (*WC 19*), Mrs Litsa (*WC 21*) and Mr Michalis (*WC 22*) said that they would not be using any kind of social networks because they did not think they had the possibility to access any kind of social networks that would prove to be beneficial. It can be said that the use of social networks was not an option for them, so it may be argued that there was no question about willingness to use something that was totally out of their reach. Mr Apostolou (*WC 24*) planned on not resorting to the use of social connections but he was not sure if he could 'stick' to that principle to the end. He said

I am not sure that I will insist to the end on that [not resorting to social connections] when I will be faced with the *cruel reality*. I do not exclude the possibility that in the end I may resort and seek ... [the help of social connections] but it is not something that I plan on doing.

Parents willing to make use of social networks

Nearly half the parents interviewed indicated that they were willing to use their social networks to promote the interests of their children regardless of whether they thought that this process was acceptable or not, or whether they thought they had the kind of social networks needed or not. For the parents who knew that they did not have the kinds of networks needed this willingness had the element of wishful thinking in the sense that they were expressing their hope that they might be helped in some way by a source.

From the PMC parents Mr Yiorgiou (*PMC 2*) appeared to be willing to make use of his social connections to help his daughter:

Of course if my social connections will be needed, definitely, I am prepared to use them. Every parent would do this ... I would be telling lies if I were to say differently...

Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*) had a similar attitude as this extract from his comments shows. He appeared to be willing to use all kinds of social connections he had to promote/secure his son's prospects for employment.

Listen, let me tell you something. If I knew that everything was done in a meritocratic way I would never try to ... I would be the last person to look for "mesa". But from the moment that I know that others will do it ... now you are going to say to me "if you stop, others will stop too. That's how this will stop." Yes, I agree. But when it's your child and it is natural that you will want to protect him any way you can. Until they get a job you should be by them. It would be ideal to let them be by themselves to compete on equal terms. That would be the best thing but until then...

Mr Loizou (*PMC 6*)

Five LMC parents indicated that they were prepared to mobilise their social connections. Mr Nikolaou (*LMC 9*) appeared willing to use his social connections to help his children because he thought that in this way he was offering the most he could for them. He seemed to be worried only by the fact that his connections did not reach high enough, so as to be able to aim higher. The case where he describes the fact that he preferred to discourage his daughter from getting to higher levels in education because in this way he felt that he would not be able to help with his connections is very telling. Mr and Mrs Andreou (*LMC 10*) said that:

...look if we need to do it yes, because even though they [the children] may get good degrees you have to use them [social connections].

So would Mr Athou (*LMC 11*) who very clearly stated that:

I have used *mesa*... mediated for other people... I would do the same for my son when he comes back from his studies. To get a good job you need help.

Mrs Michael (*LMC 14*) when asked the same question, that is, if they would be willing to seek the help of social networks to secure better prospects for her son she said that her family would definitely resort to social networks

Definitely, I believe yes we will have to run. Parents, friends, relatives ... since we see that that's the way things are in Cyprus. I would have liked to be otherwise but...

Mr Daniel (*LMC 15*) believed that he would definitely resort to the use of any *mesa* he may have had available but he believed that if his daughter worked independently in the private sector they might not be necessary. For many WC parents their willingness to resort to social networks was more a case of wishful thinking than expression of intention to mobilise any real social networks because as was shown previously many felt that they did not have the kinds of social networks required. For Mrs Agapiou (*WC 20*), for example, her willingness had the element of wish when she said '*if* we can find a *meso* to get her [her daughter] a good job ...[it would be welcomed/ we would be using it]'

Mrs Teresa (*WC 18*) said that 'of course' she would use any social connections her family might have, to offer every possible help to her son although she acknowledged that her son had to, at least, fulfil the formal requirements that the position he would be applying required.

8.4.3 Strategies coping with the availability/unavailability of social capital

As has been shown above parental access to necessary social capital to promote social goals referring to the future prospects of the children was not equally available to all. In fact both the 'quantity' as well as the 'quality' of social capital differed substantially among the different social groups. Table 8.4 presents an analysis of the educational aspirations of students in relation to the available social capital. It details the availability of social capital (ASC), the willingness to mobilise it (WSC) and the educational aspirations of students (EDASP). If one looks at the graphic representation of the data presented in Table 8.1 (see figure 8.1) one may notice a gender pattern in the educational aspirations and social capital. It appears that the educational aspirations in relation to the available social capital in all three groups favour the boys more than the girls. This may imply a number of things the most important of which is that the boys tend to aim higher because there is more

willingness for social capital to be mobilised to offer them advantages for materialising their educational credentials in the labour market. This links with the comments made earlier about the fact that there are differences in expectation from boys and girls in the sense that boys are under more pressure to secure employment at the end of their educational journey. As was commented upon earlier, it appears that for a large number of contemporary Cypriots (as this was demonstrated by the views that parents expressed) men and women are expected to perform different roles in society, namely for the man to be the main provider in a future family and the woman to offer additional complementary support to the family income.

Case No	Interviewee	Student Gender	ASC	WSC	EDASP
1.	Mrs Dimou, <i>Bank manager</i>	<i>m</i>	+	-	Economics
2.	Mr and Mrs Yiorgiou, <i>Lawyer, Interior Designer</i>	<i>f</i>	+	+	Law
3.	Mr Paris, <i>Owner of large imports company</i>	<i>m</i>	+	+	Business law
4.	Mr Konstantinou, <i>Senior sales manager</i>	<i>f</i>	+	-	Accountancy
5.	Mr Fotiou, <i>Doctor</i>	<i>f</i>	+	-	English literature
6.	Mr Loizou, <i>Senior Civil Servant</i>	<i>m</i>	+	+	Applied Mathematics
7.	Mr Simou, <i>Deputy Head teacher Sec. School</i>	<i>m</i>	±	±	Primary school teacher
8.	Mr and Mrs Kosta, <i>Senior Civil Servant, Bank clerk</i>	<i>f</i>	+	-	Greek literature
9.	Mr Nikolaou, <i>Food shop owner</i>	<i>f</i>	±	±	Economics/Primary school teacher
10.	Mr and Mrs Andreou, <i>Petrol shop owner, Bank clerk</i>	<i>f</i>	±	-	Economics/Primary school teaching
11.	Mr Athou, <i>Sales Manager in Cyprus Airways</i>	<i>m</i>	+	+	Business
12.	Mr Kostaki, <i>Assistant Accountant</i>	<i>f</i>	-	-	Psychology
13.	Mr and Mrs Sotiriou, <i>Secretary in civil Service, Bank employee</i>	<i>m</i>	-	-	Mathematics
14.	Mrs Michael, <i>Junior Civil Servant</i>	<i>m</i>	+	+	Engineering
15.	Mr Daniel, <i>Technician in Semi-public organisation</i>	<i>f</i>	+	+	Special education
16.	Mr Christodoulou, <i>Owns furniture workshop</i>	<i>m</i>	-	-	Special education
17.	Mrs Antoniou, <i>Housewife</i>	<i>f</i>	-	+	no
18.	Mrs Teresa, <i>Housewife</i>	<i>m</i>	+	+	Military or Police academy
19.	Mr Argyrou, <i>Barber</i>	<i>f</i>	-	-	no
20.	Mrs Agapiou <i>Housewife</i>	<i>f</i>	-	±	no
21.	Mrs Litsa <i>Hairdresser</i>	<i>f</i>	-	-	Primary teacher
22.	Mr Michalis <i>Traditional confectioner</i>	<i>m</i>	-	-	no
23.	Mr Anastasiou, <i>Factory Worker</i>	<i>m</i>	+	+	Journalism
24.	Mr Apostolou, <i>Office worker</i>	<i>m</i>	±	±	Greek literature

Table 8.5: The educational aspirations in relation to the available social capital

There are interesting observations regarding the strategies that families employ to cope with the availability of social capital that may be made. Some families who appeared to lack the kind of social capital needed, were better able to cope with this absence of social capital than others in the sense that they were still making choices leading to high professional positions. Basically, these families, due to their position, could potentially access social networks that could be beneficial for their children but were planning not to use them because they did not want to create outstanding obligations. Thus, they were trying to develop strategies that would hopefully allow them to avoid seeking the help of these networks. Among these strategies, one was the resort to their cultural capital.

Mrs Dimou: ... we made it clear to him that whatever job he decides to do either on his own or with an organisation we will not be prepared to go and ask "beg" anybody so that he is employed.

Inter.: Is that why he has to get the best credentials?

Mrs Dimou: Exactly.

Inter.: How do you see the employment prospects of a young person coming from studies today?

Mrs Dimou: It is difficult. Very difficult.

Inter.: Does this worry you?

Mrs Dimou: Yes it certainly does. Because you spend a fortune and in the end you are not sure if the money you spent will be paid back or not but ... I suppose money is not the issue ... the important thing is that he will feel capable to overcome [*the use of mesa, unlawful competition*].... because to tell you the truth because he himself wouldn't want to beg he may not even come back to work in Cyprus after his studies.

One other way to avoid seeking the help of social networks was the pursuit of education that in the end would not require their help to produce employment opportunities such as school teaching (*PMC* 5,7,8) or accountancy (*PMC* 4). School teaching appeared to be an option for some *LMC* families who lacked social capital as well (*LMC* 9,10,13 16). School teaching has become a favourable higher education destination and it has been in demand in the past ten years or so among those who intend to pursue studies in Greece and at the University of Cyprus. This is often attributed to the fact that it is regarded as an occupation that once you succeed in entering the university, offers prospects for immediate employment and also many other benefits of the public sector (job security, high earnings in relation to the private sector, etc).

For the four *WC* families whose children indicated no intention to pursue higher studies the lack of social capital was usually accompanied by shortage in the possession of financial capital. These parents clearly indicated that they could not

afford to send their children to higher education. Here, one may make the assumption that because these families lacked social capital as well, any investment in their children's education coming from a tight family budget would not be a 'sensible' investment. And this was because such an investment would not offer any actual prospects since all were acknowledging that social networks (which all indicated that they lacked) was the most important element for securing a 'good' job. So, for those working class families whose children intended to pursue higher studies, such as case WC 21, primary school teaching seemed to be one of their limited options. Mrs Litsa (WC 21) had the following to say:

That is why all children want to become teachers, because they feel that it is the only thing that if you manage to enter, there aren't any mesa. And then the competition is very fierce. And what kind of job is a teacher? It is not that important. My daughter has so much knowledge and ability that her teachers don't agree that she should go to become a teacher. Because she went to Practiko, she did not go to Classics, because she likes those lessons. She should have gone into political studies. But who is going to help her from then on?

Mrs Litsa (WC 21)

It can be argued that for some parents the lack of social capital or the acknowledgement of their social capital's limitations seems to entail making compromises as to the level of education that their children might aim for. The comments of Mr Nikolaou (LMC 9) are very telling.

If my daughter has all the requirements at least at a bank I should be able to get her employed. But if she goes for further studies it would be very difficult for me then because she would be aiming higher where the positions are limited. But for lower positions I don't think it would be very difficult for me.

Mr Nikolaou (LMC 9)

To sum up, there were different strategies to deal with the unavailability of social capital. It has to be said however, that *PMC* families appeared to be better able to adopt compensatory strategies and to cope with this shortage compared with working class families. This was because they had other resources that they could draw upon, primarily financial capital but also cultural capital, in the sense that they appeared to have better understanding of educational processes and opportunities available that did not require the help of social networks to materialise in the future. Moreover, there was a distinctive characteristic in *PMC* lack of social capital. This 'deficiency' was the product mainly of their unwillingness to resort to the help of social networks for various reasons and not due to absence of social networks and connections. This, as was commented upon in an earlier section, offers a sense of security, it generates a *habitus* of security for making choices with better prospects. On the other hand,

families from lower social classes could not do the same. The lack of social capital was generating a feeling of helplessness about the future, a *habitus* of compromise and of setting lower aspirations. These families did not have many alternatives to consider because they had no alternative resources to compensate for their lack of social capital, in other words, they had narrow 'horizons for choices'.

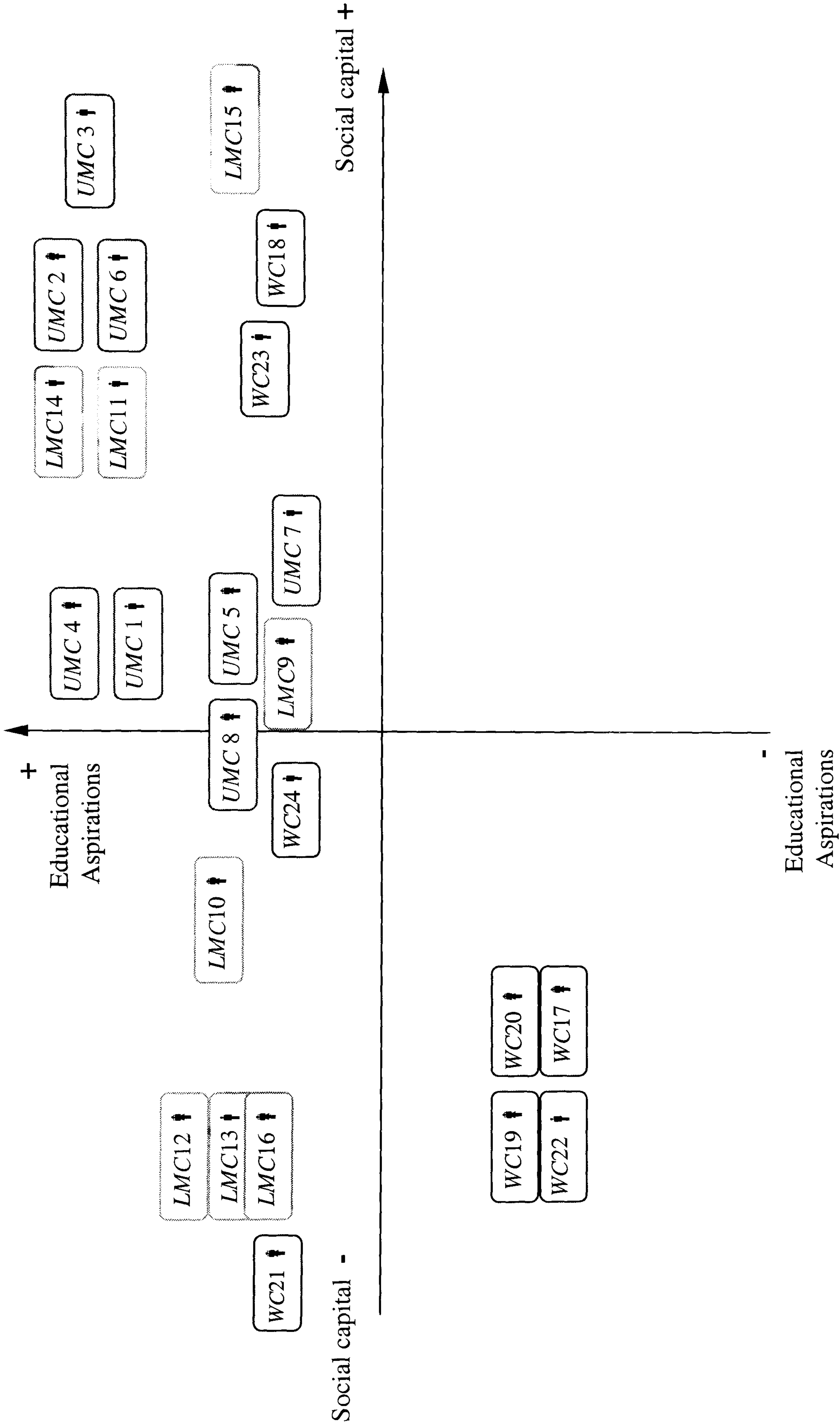


Figure 8.2: Mapping the interviewees in relation to their perceived social capital and the educational aspirations of their children

8.4.4 Expectations for the future

The expectations of parents relate to what they regarded as preferred and realistic outcomes for their children at the end of their educational journey. For most middle class parents, as Table 8.5 shows the public, semi-public and banking sectors represent the most attractive and prestigious places in which they aspire to see their children employed. The dominant place that positions in the public, semi-public and banking sectors have in the priorities of most parents for their children seems to confirm the general notion that these sectors offer substantial benefits compared with the private sector.⁴

There appears to be a pattern relating paternal aspirations and social positions. The higher up the social ladder parents are, the higher the aspirations parents have for their children. In particular *PMC* parents seem to aspire to see their children in professional positions, whereas for most of the *WC* parents, a job of white collar status in an office or in a bank appears to be the kind of aspiration that would constitute upward social mobility for their children. Gender also seems to have role to play. Female students coming from *PMC* families had aspirations for professional as well as teaching courses whereas for *LMC* teaching was the most common aspiration. For three female *WC* students no aspirations for further studies had been expressed. Similarly for male students the higher the social classes the higher they were directed to professional courses and to teaching to a lesser degree.

It has been pointed out in the previous section (8.4.3) that when *PMC* parents felt that they lacked social capital they tended to compensate for this shortage by mobilising other forms of capital (financial capital to 'buy' more prestigious education and cultural capital which constituted of their knowledge of educational processes and procedures). A strategy to cope with the absence of social capital can be seen if one looks at two male students graduating in the same specialisation from the Lyceum. If one compares cases *PMC* 6 and *LMC* 13 he/she will observe at a first sight that both students indicated having similar educational aspirations. In particular, both male students intended to pursue mathematics for their higher education. However, they had different occupational aspirations. The student from the *PMC* family intended to pursue applied mathematics and his parents aspired to send him to Britain for post

⁴ These benefits relate to issues that have to do with job security, higher earnings compared to the private sector, better working hours, better working conditions etc.

graduate studies and later see him employed as an engineer in a large semi-public organisation. The parents of the student from the LMC family aspired to see their son working as a mathematics teacher, first by offering private lessons to secondary school students, and later by securing a position in the public educational service. The difference in the level of occupational aspirations directly links with the social capital that each family had available to use (but also their cultural and economic capital) which clearly favoured the PMC family.

Case No	Interviewee	Student gender	Occupational aspirations	I would like to see my child working in ...
1.	Mrs Dimou, <i>Bank manager</i>	<i>m</i>	Economist	a large financial organisation.
2.	Mr and Mrs Yiorgiou, <i>Lawyer, Interior Designer</i>	<i>f</i>	Lawyer	public or semi-public sector.
3.	Mr Paris, <i>Owner of large imports company</i>	<i>m</i>	Business lawyer	public or semi-public sector.
4.	Mr Konstantinou, <i>Senior sales manager</i>	<i>f</i>	Accountant	an accountant firm.
5.	Mr Fotiou, <i>Doctor</i>	<i>f</i>	Secondary school teacher	public educational service.
6.	Mr Loizou, <i>Senior Civil Servant</i>	<i>m</i>	Engineer	semi-public large organisations.
7.	Mr Simou, <i>Deputy Head teacher Sec. School</i>	<i>m</i>	Primary school teacher	public educational service
8.	Mr and Mrs Kosta, <i>Senior Civil Servant, Bank clerk</i>	<i>f</i>	Secondary school teacher	<i>frontisteria</i> first until she is appointed in public educational service
9.	Mr Nikolaou, <i>Food shop owner</i>	<i>f</i>	Economist/ Primary Teacher	bank/ public educational service.
10.	Mr and Mrs Andreou, <i>Petrol shop owner, Bank clerk</i>	<i>f</i>	Economist/ Primary Teacher	bank/ public educational service.
11.	Mr Athou, <i>Sales Manager in Cyprus Airways</i>	<i>m</i>	Economist	public or semi-public sector.
12.	Mr Kostaki, <i>Assistant Accountant</i>	<i>f</i>	Psychologist	private sector.
13.	Mr and Mrs Sotiriou, <i>Secretary in civil Service, Bank employee</i>	<i>m</i>	Mathematics teacher	working in <i>frontisteria</i> first until he is appointed in public educational service
14.	Mrs Michael, <i>Junior Civil Servant</i>	<i>m</i>	Engineer	public or semi-public sector.
15.	Mr Daniel, <i>Technician in Semi-public organisation</i>	<i>f</i>	Speech therapy	independent speech therapist
16.	Mr Christodoulou, <i>Owns furniture workshop</i>	<i>m</i>	Special educationalist	Special education
17.	Mrs Antoniou, <i>Housewife</i>	<i>f</i>	Secretary	Office
18.	Mrs Teresa, <i>Housewife</i>	<i>m</i>	police or army officer	military or the police force
19.	Mr Argyrou, <i>Barber</i>	<i>f</i>	Secretary	Office
20.	Mrs Agapiou <i>Housewife</i>	<i>f</i>	Secretary	Office
21.	Mrs Litsa <i>Hairdresser</i>	<i>f</i>	Primary school teacher	working in educational public service
22.	Mr Michalis <i>Traditional confectioner</i>	<i>m</i>	Clerk	office or bank
23.	Mr Anastasiou, <i>Factory Worker</i>	<i>m</i>	Journalist	Press
24.	Mr Apostolou, <i>Office worker</i>	<i>m</i>	Secondary school teacher	working in educational public service

Table 8.6: The aspirations of parents for future outcomes of their children

Gender seems to play a role in the occupational aspirations. This directly links with the differences that were noticed in Figure 8.1 regarding the educational aspiration of male and female students, which, as was shown, appeared to favour boys. In all three groups of the sample, boys appear to have higher occupational aspirations than girls. This was also observed when the data from the questionnaires were analysed in Chapter 6. Boys appear to aim at higher occupational positions than girls.

An interesting element in the occupational aspirations of parents for their children is that almost all aspire to see their children in white-collar jobs. This agrees with comments made by writers such as Attalides (1981) and Karagiorgos (1986) that there is probably a conviction inherent deep in the psyche of modern Cypriots which makes them downgrade the value of manual blue collar jobs in favour of white-collar, office, 'educated' positions. It is not surprising therefore that there is often great demand in the labour market for manual workers, something that led to the employment of thousands of foreign workers, mostly from poor countries of Eastern Europe or the Middle East, to deal with 'unsociable' jobs.

8.5 Profiling Greek Cypriot families in relation to how they utilise their available capitals for choice making in education

In this section an attempt is made to build profiles of different types of contemporary Greek Cypriot families based on the different forms of capital they have available for use to influence their educational practices and the choices that they make in relation to their children's futures.

8.5.1 General characteristics of the modern Greek Cypriot family

The contemporary Greek Cypriot family is a family that would normally consist of the parents and two or three children. Both parents would normally be present in the home, as the low divorce and separation rates indicate (Appendix B), and at least one parent would be in full time employment as the unemployment rate within the age group of 40-60 indicates (1-2% in our sample). The contemporary Greek Cypriot family operates within a social and cultural environment where one may come across an amalgam of both modernist as well as pre-modernist features. This can be attributed to the rapid transformation of the society from a traditional agrarian society

at the beginning of the twentieth century to a society whose population is mostly urban and employed in the services sectors, at the end of the same century. As for modern Cypriots' cultural orientation, a section of them is keen to be seen to endorse an 'ideology' that regards modernity as identical in meaning with 'Europe' but without rejecting 'traditional' practices and habits. One other section maintains that the Greek Cypriot society should stick to its own distinctive cultural identity, which is Greek Orthodox Christianity and should not be alienated from its roots and traditions. The degree of association to one or the other direction varies between families depending on their social standing. The middle classes, for example, are keener to be seen to endorse modern Eurocentric practices than other social classes.

A prevalent traditional practice among most Cypriot parents is to try to provide a 'good' future for their children as they regard this as one of their primary duties (probably the most important one). It is within the Greek Cypriot culture that parents are expected to make the best possible provisions for their children. In fact, providing for children is often seen as a source of pride and social recognition. Often parents' social success is measured by how well they have managed to 'secure' their children in different domains. These provisions may take different forms. They may refer to providing the best possible education, a good marriage, financial provisions that have to do with building a house (usually for the daughter as a form of dowry), passing on land etc. The focus of this study has been on educational provisions.

In parents' efforts to make educational provisions they intentionally or unintentionally make use of all their available capitals. These capitals affect the way choices of future educational and occupational destinations are made. Different families develop different strategies in order to maximise the opportunities for their children according to their available capitals.

8.5.2 Professional middle class families

The parents in a professional middle class family would most likely be both in full time employment. The father would hold a professional position in the public, semi-public or private sector. The mother would hold, at least, a job of white-collar status. Their jobs would provide their family with stable and good incomes. Apart from financial capital, professional middle class families would be well equipped with the possession of non-monetary capitals. More specifically, they would possess ample

amounts of cultural and social capital. These forms of capital would be reflected in their lifestyle but would also have implications in the choice making regarding their children's future destinations.

i. Cultural capital in a professional middle class home

A professional/middle class family would most likely encourage its children to be involved in cultural activities (attending museums, art galleries, theatres, concerts and lectures). Participating in cultural activities would not necessarily yield any direct advantages in terms of promoting better educational achievement in school. Their importance may be assumed to lie in that they serve as a means of distinction. These activities, many of which may be characterised as Western or Eurocentric, correspond to the middle classes inclination to be seen as endorsing an ideology that sees European and Western values and beliefs as being modern. These values and beliefs are in contrast to Greek Orthodox values, which are seen as traditional.

Moreover, within a middle class home, it is more likely to find certain cultural/educational objects that signify investment and emphasis on intellectual pursuits. It is also highly likely that within a professional middle class family there would be an environment that encourages children to read literature. It must be noted that the analysis of the data of the present study has indicated that the presence of certain cultural/educational objects in the home and the fact that students from professional middle class families read more literature compared with students from lower social classes does not have any clear positive relationship with their academic performance. The kind of literature that students tend to read is a mixture of contemporary Greek as well as English/American literature⁵. As with participation in cultural activities, reading literature and owning certain cultural/educational items is something that relates to a distinctive lifestyle and may have indirect implications for the intellectual development of children from these families.

One other aspect of the presence of cultural capital in a professional/middle class home relates to parents. The parents of these families would be well informed of the educational processes, the debates on educational matters, be critical of deficiencies in the system of public education and know their way around it. This would partly be

the result of professional/middle class parents' higher educational experiences. Their knowledge of the system would allow them to be more involved and be active participants in the making of choices for their children's secondary education. Here are some examples of parents' involvement in their children's education:

I was intending to send my oldest daughter to a private school as well. But unfortunately when my daughter was graduating from primary school it was the time that they said that the University of Cyprus would not accept students from private schools. So, we talked it over with my wife and we decided that it wouldn't be fair to deprive her from the opportunity to study here at the university... later all the private schools reacted and they managed to reverse this ruling in six months with the condition that they would increase the teaching of the Greek language. I advised my daughter to leave but she said that she didn't want to go because her friends were there and so on and so I left her there.

Inter.: What happened with the younger daughter?

I made it clear to her from the beginning. Don't you start on me about you friends of anything because you are going to a private school and you will make friends there too.

Mr Konstantinou, *PMC 4*

As far as my son is concerned I let him make his decisions based on his abilities. It seems that the theoretical subjects suit him better and based on that we made the choices for his A Levels. He is directed to law. And when I say he is directed ... I guide him ... to start with law. He also sees this that law suits him better ... that is why he chose Law, Economics and History. He will start with Law.

Inter.: What did you have in mind for the future when you made the choice of Law?

My thinking was that our business conditions are such that support my sons entrance to the business either with a Law or with an Economics degree. In any case what matters most in these areas is experience as well. Besides Law is a very good subject for many other jobs and all things going well he would do postgraduate studies for an MBA.

Mr Paris, *PMC 3*

After school our first choice is a new programme at the Science University in Greece, Applied Mathematics and Physics. Our second choice is Mathematics but not to become a teacher. We will send him later for graduate studies in England or America to get a specialisation... I believe that ... if he enters the Science University and comes out with such qualifications he will be ready for the labour market. For example jets engineer, energy generators engineer. I expect to see him in these kinds of jobs.

Mr Loizou, *PMC 6*

Parental cultural capital is supported by their social capital in the form of social connections with educationally significant individuals and institutions (teachers, frontisteria etc.) and by their economic capital (opting for English-speaking private

⁵ When students were asked to provide names of magazines that they were reading they referred to Greek and English speaking magazines covering issues of fashion, technology, science, current affairs,

education for better ‘quality’ more expensive *frontisteria*). All these capitals are used additively to produce the contexts of choice making as the best possible opportunities. These opportunities are looked at in detail below.

ii. Secondary education provisions

A professional middle class family may opt to send their children to English speaking schools preferably the Nicosia English School, which has traditionally been the preferred school of a group of the middle classes. Other professional/middle class families send their children to public Lyceum to specialisations that prepare students for post secondary school studies (what I have called academically oriented specialisations). They might be liberal or conservative in their attitudes towards the issue of offering similar opportunities to their children in relation to their gender. Having said this, they would not deprive their daughters of the chance to pursue higher studies, but they would most likely be more flexible and relaxed as to the choices that a daughter might make. Because of their cultural capital, professional middle class parents would most likely be able to recognise what are perceived to be deficiencies in the public school system and they would ensure that their children attend selective private lessons *frontisteria*. It is highly likely that professional middle class parents would be directly involved in enrolling their children in these lessons. By doing this they would be ‘ensuring’ that their children have the best possible opportunities for success because it is widely believed that *frontisteria* maximise children’s opportunities to enter selective fields of study that lead to professions of higher social status.

iii. Social capital, familial habitus and choices for future destinations

In terms of social capital professional/middle class parents would be in a position to have the kind of social connections that would allow them to access social networks that provide the potential to promote the interests of their children. Some may have used such networks themselves to get to their current position. Some professional/middle class parents may even be in a position where they themselves are providers/gatekeepers to social networks. Some parents may be willing to use their social networks whereas other may not be equally willing to mobilise them. The presence of these networks supports a certain familial *habitus* that gives the family

etc. 32.7% indicated reading TV magazines compared to 67.8% of the working class students.

members the confidence to make choices that, should they require help from these sources in the future, this help will be available. The parents who would not be planning to resort to such practices would most likely be in a position to develop alternative strategies making use of other forms of capitals; economic capital to 'secure' unquestionable qualifications; cultural capital to cope with the demands of schooling and to identify the prospects of various options.

The families who send their children to English-speaking schools would send their children to Britain or to the USA for higher studies because they value English-speaking and in particular British higher education more. Those who send their children to Greek-speaking universities would aspire to send their children to England for postgraduate studies.

A perception that seems to be widespread in this social category is that the more educational qualifications one acquires the more effective one's social networks become. Having said this, it must be said that not all professional middle class parents would be equally willing to mobilise their social networks. These parents, however, would be better prepared to protect their children against others who are mobilising their own social networks to achieve their aims. Parents who are unwilling to make use of potential social capital seek more qualifications for their children because, according to their reasoning, it would be scandalous to allow people with high and unquestionable educational credentials to be left out of the competition for prestigious positions. The preferred places for these parents for their children are the public and semi-public sectors because of the benefits, the conditions and the returns that these sectors offer. Others, less often, may seek more modest ambitions that would require less possible involvement of social networks.

Professional middle class parents would be very confident and precise when talking about their social connections. The confidence that seems to come from access to social networks and connections, which as was noted in Section 8.4, become effective social capital when they are available and there is willingness to use them to secure advantages for the children in family, shapes a familial *habitus* that allows for such choices to be made that enhance the prospects of social success. This familial *habitus* directs young individuals to aim for high professional courses even if there is

a relative closure for prestigious positions in the labour market. It provides young individuals with the necessary confidence to compete in a labour market that requires not only formal educational credentials but also strong social connections to make formal educational credentials effective. In this sense their 'horizon for action' are enhanced and there are a number of options to consider.

The professional middle class families who chose not to 'exploit' their social capital to its full extent, in the sense that they appear not to be willing to make use of their potential social connections may respond in two distinct ways. They may seek more educational credentials in the hope that these, on their own without the help of social networks, would prove sufficient for their children (a modernist approach) or some may set less ambitious goals, e.g. school teaching which is a respectable job but most importantly does not require social networks and connections. There appears to be a gender pattern in the last option in the sense that female students would more likely pursue a teaching career.

8.5.3 Intermediate- Lower middle class (*LMC*) families

The parents in a lower middle class family would be both working in sub-professional white-collar jobs. The father may own a small business, or work as trained personnel in the public, semi-public or private sector. The mother would most likely hold a clerical job. Most parents in this group would have experienced upward social mobility in relation to their own parents. These families' cultural capital and social capital, along with their economic capital, would play a crucial role in the decision-making process for their children's future.

i. Cultural capital in a *LMC* home

Compared with students from professional middle class homes the *LMC* students would be less involved in cultural activities such as attending museums, art galleries, theatres, concerts and lectures, own fewer educational/cultural objects and read less literature. As to what these students tend to read, most *LMC* students pointed out that the kind of magazines they tended to read were mostly TV magazines. As in the case of students from professional middle class students their cultural practices do not

have clear direct implications to their school performance or their level of aspirations.

LMC parents would be involved in their children's schooling. This would be the product of their adequate knowledge of the system, as most would most likely have graduated from secondary school. Most would be in a position to understand the prospects and the possibilities that different specialisations would offer but others may not be so well informed and thus make choices that are not always most effective.

Looking back to the choices we made [regarding his daughter specialisation] ... they were wrong. As I told you earlier one of the reasons was the fact that we were *misinformed*. It might have been better if she followed Classics [instead of Economics]

Mr Kostaki (*LMC* 12)

Most lower middle class parents would try to make the most of what the public school system has to offer to their children.

ii. Secondary education provisions

Lower middle class parents tend to send their children mostly to public Lyceums. Most would aspire to see their children studying in Greek universities or the University of Cyprus. *LMC* parents tend to direct their children to follow specialisations that offer the possibilities for higher education (academically oriented specialisations). Like professional middle class parents they would tend to cope with what they see as deficiencies in the public secondary school by enrolling their children in *frontisteria*. They would not be as selective as professional/middle class parents. Many may opt for the state organised *frontisteria*

They [*frontisteria*] are essential with today's realities. If you do not attend them then it is very difficult to pass your examinations. Of course there is a difference from the time that my son was graduating secondary school. Then they were illegal and we had to rush from one side of the town to the other. At least now they are legal, they are public and they are at her school and my daughter attends to them from 3-6 (p.m.).

Mr Nikolaou, *LMC* 9

LMC would be as committed to providing what they think is best for their children as *PMC* parents would be. As to their attitudes towards providing for their children in relation to their child's gender it is highly likely that they would be ready to provide them with similar (but not always 'equal', see example of positive distinctions in favour of boys) opportunities but they would probably have a variety of attitudes as

to what suits best male and female students ranging from stereotypic/traditional notions to more liberal and open ideas.

iii. Social capital, familial habitus and choices for future destinations

Many *LMC* parents would possess the kind of social connections that can prove to be beneficial for their children but others would not. The nature of their social networks would be a mixture of vertical and horizontal relationships but it is most likely that they would be more vertical in character rather than horizontal. Some would rely on mediators for help.

The availability of social capital shapes a familial *habitus* in the home, which informs the different strategies that different lower middle class families adopt in order to make the best provisions for their children. Private higher education in Cyprus seems to be an option for this group of parents. The limitations of their economic capital would direct those *LMC* parents to consider sending their children to the private higher institutions (colleges) in Cyprus for the beginning of their studies with the prospect of sending them to English-speaking universities later to graduate with a degree from there. This strategy would mostly suit girls because even if their degrees are not ‘formally’ recognised by the Government it would not constitute a serious impediment since some consider girls as not being under pressure to secure immediate employment after their studies in the same way as male students are. Also, some ‘traditionally-minded’ *LMC* parents may want to have their daughter staying with the family in Cyprus. This connects to some parents’ conservative notion that girls need to be protected and thus stay at home as long as possible even at the expense of making compromises in their education.

If she [his daughter] manages to secure a place at the University of Cyprus that would be very good because she would stay with us when she studies etc. If she gets a place in Greece for economics we will see because I don’t think it would be wise for a girl who wants to work in a bank or in an office to go to Patra (*university*) for example to study Economics. It is best to go to a private college here in Nicosia.

Mr Nikolaou, *LMC 9*

I hope that she will go into a college ... because she is young she is only 17 years old ... you can’t send her abroad, so, we will try to find a course for her in Cyprus and then she might go and graduate abroad...

We sent letters to 8 universities abroad to find out whether they would accept her to continue her studies there if she attends 2 years in Cyprus first.

Mr Daniel, *LMC 15*

So, for some *LMC* families the choices for future destinations tend to be influenced by gender. For female students the choice of teaching tends to be regarded as the most suitable for girls. Other choices might include clerical jobs in offices, banks etc. which do not require very high-level studies at universities.

For *LMC* boys their choices may include a variety of fields but they would tend to focus on middle professional courses. A marked contrast was presented in the cases of two male students, one from a professional middle class family and the other from a lower middle class family. Theoretically both appeared to have similar educational aspirations to pursue mathematics. But the first one (from the *PMC* family) aspired to become a high-tech engineer for energy generators or jet engines while the other one (from the *LMC* family) aspired to become a secondary school teacher working in *frontisteria* until he could secure a position in public schools. The level of their occupational aspiration directly relates with the social capital that was available to their families to materialise their educational credentials in the labour market.

8.5.4 Working class families

Most *WC* fathers would be engaged in traditional working class manual jobs. The mother would most likely be a housewife, having worked in manual jobs at some points in her life. The fact that most mothers would not be working would deprive the family of a substantial source of income (less economic capital). The financial shortcomings would be accompanied by limitations in the possession of non-material capitals as well. It would be expected that working class families would possess less cultural and social capital compared with the other two groups of families, something which would have effects on the children's life chances for success.

i. Cultural capital in a *WC* home

In a *WC* home environment one would not come across high levels of cultural capital as could be measure by indicators specified in this study. More specifically *WC* students would not be particularly expected to follow cultural events, invest on cultural/education objects or read literature. Even if this does not have direct effects on the academic performance of *WC* students, as the analysis of the data of this study has shown, it nevertheless signifies lack of emphasis on “intellectual” pursuits. One

characteristic of this is when students from working class background were asked about their reading habits. Of the 79.5 percent who indicated that they read magazines when asked to provide some titles of magazines that they read an astonishing number (67.8%) indicated TV magazines (guides).

Most WC parents are genuinely concerned about the schooling of their children but they are not be in a position to negotiate successfully with the system because of lack of confidence but also inadequate understanding and knowledge of how the system works. This was clearly demonstrated by the following incident involving Mr Argyrou (WC 19).

Mr Argyrou: ... My daughter had this problem ... she passed *some* examination in English at the English school ... but her English teacher still gave her a very low grade ... she [the teacher] had this attitude ... I went to the school to ask why she had given my child such a low grade ... just because she is *morfomeni* [educated] and I am not ... they [the teachers] think we cannot judged them ... she said: “*Your daughter did not write well in the test that we had in the class, Mister. Don’t you think we know our job?*”

Inter.: What happened then? Did anything change?

Mr Argyrou: No ... but what can you do...

Most WC parents would not have graduated from secondary school due to various reasons and this would deprive them of knowledge of the system and as a result many would rely on their children for information on educational matters. The decisions that refer to the children’s secondary schooling would fall on the children’s shoulders who would appear to ‘know better what is best for them’. This would be true for the selection of specialisation in the Lyceum and for enrolling in *frontisteria*. Most WC parents would appreciate that their children should follow extra lessons to improve their performance or to prepare for examinations but they would not be directly involved in the selection of the *frontisteria*.

Another characteristic of working class families is that the mothers would be more involved and knowledgeable about the education of their children than the fathers. This may be attributed to the fact that WC mothers, more than any other group of mothers from other social classes, would not be doing paid employment having the obligation to stay at home to raise the children and thus it would be among their responsibilities to follow the children’s education.

ii. Secondary education provisions

Children from WC families tend to mostly follow specialisations in the public Lyceum that are vocationally oriented or Technical education. There is a gender issue here. WC boys tend to follow Technical education whereas girls tend to focus on the S4 specialisation (Secretarial studies), something that is reflected in their occupational aspirations later on or to S1 specialisation (Classics).

Most working class students would be attending *frontisteria* in order to be able to cope with the demands of schooling and to improve their chances of succeeding in examinations. Their lack of adequate economic and cultural capital would not allow them to be as selective in their choice of *frontisteria*. Thus, they would most likely opt to follow the state organised *frontisteria*, which are less costly. Contrary to PMC families who use their capitals additively to maximise their potentials, for WC families the fact that they have less economic, social and cultural capital available compared with PMC families leads to fewer options to consider for the future.

iii. Social capital, familial habitus and choices for future destinations

In terms of the social capital available to WC families that could be mobilised to secure advantages for the children's future prospects, it would not be a resource easily found in most WC families. Having said this, it would be a desirable resource, as most would appreciate its effectiveness in achieving social objectives. Sometimes they may even be over-appreciating it (exaggerating) as a result of the fact that most would not be in a position to have direct knowledge of how it actually operates and of its real potential. Many would feel alienated from the procedure of using social networks to promote social goals. This would often lead to attitudes that would indicate that 'this [social capital] is not for us'. The few parents that might actually have engaged successfully in social networks and accrued benefits for themselves in the past would most likely have engaged in low forms of social capital and the benefits that they secured would have materialised modest aspirations.

The unavailability of social capital would most likely shape a kind of *habitus* that would not direct WC children to set high goals but rather would make them set 'pragmatic' objectives that would not require the help of higher and effective social networks. The shortcoming in the possession of different forms of capital imposes

limitations in the choices that are available to working class students. The decision to pursue higher education would be a decision that would have to take into account the pragmatic prospects of materialising the qualifications that are going to be gained. The acknowledgement that they lack social capital would make decisions very difficult. Higher education at Greek universities, at the University of Cyprus and at other public higher institutions in Cyprus is free. Students have to take part in very competitive examinations. Succeeding in those examinations in courses that offer realistic prospects in the labour market is often one of very limited choices that WC students have. Limitations in the possession of economic capital restrict the amount of options working class students might consider, such as to pursue higher education at Britain or the USA or at higher institutions of the private sector in Cyprus. In this sense their 'horizon for action' are limited, as they have to make their choices within a restricted horizon.

As to the occupational aspirations of students from working class families, girls tend to aspire for white-collar clerical jobs but many would realistically know that they could end up as low paid sales staff. As for boys even though many aspire to white-collar jobs too, it is highly likely that they will follow technical and sub-professional jobs. Here are some examples of some working class parents' comments on that.

We both end up in these decisions. She realises that I do not have the financial ability to send her to college. I can't ... I am doing two jobs, I work to build our house ... it is very difficult. She herself does not want to go [to college] either. If I had a son I would send him to the Technical school to learn a trade. Everybody wants to have higher studies, nobody wants to go to learn a trade any more. And there are jobs in this field there is money. There are jobs for young girls but there is exploitation as well. The wages are very low ...

Mr Argyrou, WC 19

Inter.: What are your for after school?

Mrs Antoniou: Up to here.

Inter.: What do you mean?

Mrs Antoniou: Find a job somewhere, secretary ... For our son we said that he would go up to third year in the Gymnasium ... because he is not enthusiastic about school ... and he will go to Technical school to follow his father's footsteps, car mechanic.

Mrs Antoniou, WC 17

... We can't send her for higher studies... to get a better job. Now she may go temporarily to work as a sales girl and then we will see... She applied to Woolworth's and we are waiting.

Mrs Agapiou, WC 20

From WC parents' accounts of the way they saw the future prospects of their children it can be seen that the choices made are heavily influenced by a mixture of factors relating to lack of various resources. Their shortcomings in effective forms of social capital are often accompanied by limitations in the possession of ample economic capital. Economic capital would allow WC children to consider various options but most importantly it would ease off the pressure for immediate employment so that they become responsible for their own expenses as soon as possible. This had been part of the two parents' reasoning (WC 19 and WC 17) for directing male children to Technical education which is widely regarded as offering prospects for learning a trade necessary for immediate employment.

8.6 Summary

This chapter has presented social capital, a kind of non-monetary form of capital, which this study regards as being very influential in informing a distinctive *habitus* towards choice making for future educational and occupational destinations. In this chapter the nature of different families' social networks, the way they influenced parents' lives and the attitude different parents adopt towards the mobilisation of networks for the benefit of the children was examined. This was done with the intention of connecting the above with distinctive patterns of choice making. It appears that professional middle class families have better quality social networks than lower class families and this influences the choices students from these families make. Those middle class families whose social capital is not of the kind needed in this respect, either because their social networks are not of the quality required or because they adopt an attitude that does not favour their application to gain advantage, tend to resort to other capitals that they have available (such as economic or cultural capital) to compensate for that limitation. In other words middle class families use their capitals in an additive manner, which enhances their 'horizons for action'. This cannot be said for lower class families who tend to make more 'pragmatic' choices because they do not have the 'luxury' of being able to consider certain options. This is mainly the product of the fact that they face limitations, not only because they tend to have less social capital of the kind necessary to support

choices made but also because they do not have the potential to compensate for this shortcoming with economic and/or cultural capital.

A gender dimension to making 'pragmatic' choices regardless of social class background refers to the fact that male students seem to be under more pressure than their female counterparts to follow routes that would secure employment as they are seen to be more responsible for supporting a future family. Compared with males, female students appear to have more flexibility in their choice making and thus are in a better position to follow their inclinations and make educationally and occupationally riskier choices. Of course, the latter is intrinsically linked with the social class of the female student, in the sense that middle class female students tend to have better prospects than working class female students, because of the capitals that they have available to utilise to materialise these choices. The presentation of the findings from the data analysis points to the need for a further theoretical discussion of the issues examined particularly the existence of diverse 'horizon of action' for students and families within which they do their choice making. Furthermore, they point to the need to examine the implications that they have for issues relating to social justice and *meritocracy* in modern Cyprus. It is these issues, amongst other, that the last chapter of this thesis addresses.

Chapter 9:

Discussion of the main findings and conclusions

The final chapter addresses the *thesis* of this study and discusses the implications of the findings of the empirical investigation in relation to the theoretical framework presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. First, there is a brief synopsis of the main findings of the empirical investigation. Before the concluding remarks in which some personal reflections on this endeavour are made, there is a discussion of the implications that this study has for future research.

9.1 The issues that this study set to address

This study set out to address the ways with which secondary school students and their families go about to make their choices regarding future educational and occupational destinations. Central to this investigation had been the role and the relative significance of the different capitals that different families have available to use intentionally to influence the way choices are made or have unintended consequences.

The theoretical framework of the study was shaped by ideas relating to the role of Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, a collective social phenomenon, developed and realised in the home, in our case in the choice making processes for post secondary school destinations. The *habitus* was seen as the product of a combination of parents' lived experiences, mostly relating to the parents' educational biographies, and of present circumstances relating to the availability of different resources (capitals) to the families who engage in decision-making processes for their younger members. First, this study set out to establish some facts relating to uncovering possible patterns in the way students make their choices for their future educational and occupational destinations. Then, it investigated particular resources that are available to contemporary Cypriot families. These resources refer particularly to cultural and social capital in the home. Even though the focus of this study was on non-monetary capitals, in the social process of choice making, the underlying assumption has always been that economic capital was and is a major contributor to the development of strategies of families to provide opportunities for their children. In addition, the

above class-specific resources were examined in order to investigate the role of gender, to establish whether there were differential class-patterned outcomes for boys and girls, and, if so, to identify the mechanisms that contributed to class/gender differentiation.

The surplus of young people with higher educational credentials in the labour market as a result of the aspirations of most Cypriot families to secure high educational credentials for their children, has created fierce competition for filling those positions that are considered to be prestigious in Cypriot society (public, semi-public, banking and other financial sectors to name the most prestigious ones). It was expected that different families would respond to the reality of the labour market in different ways. It was expected that some would be successful in this social arena whereas others would be hampered by constraints that would limit their possibilities for choice making.

The examination of the social and cultural environment within which the modern Cypriot family is located was carried out to provide evidence of the social context of the general processes of social reproduction in modern Cyprus and address key elements necessary to complete the analysis of the structuration of relative social positioning.

9.2 Main findings

9.2.1 Patterns of choice making for post school destinations

An increase in the number of students progressing to higher education is not always, indeed, is rarely, the best measure of a reduction in educational inequality. According to Reay (1998) it is often assumed that wider access to higher education is promoting social justice in society. Even though, at a first glance, this may appear to be a suitable assumption, there is a danger of supporting a spurious argument if one does not probe behind the picture that the numbers present. It can be the case that numbers may disguise real inequalities that exist in the availability of opportunities for choice. The present study has shown that an increase in the number of students entering higher education does not necessarily coincide with more social justice. In fact, when the ways people who pursue higher education come to make their choices as to what

they would aim at are focused on, inequalities are revealed. Reay (1998:519) comments that social injustices lie not just in exclusions from higher education, but 'are also to be found in the unequal patterns of choice made by the growing ranks of both young and mature students who take degree courses'. Such issues for contemporary Cyprus have been explained in this study.

Before going into the discussion of the findings in relation to the choices made for post school destinations and their consequences for the individuals concerned, as well as for the Cypriot society in general, it is useful to recapitulate on the main findings in relation to the research questions/hypotheses posed in Section 5.1.2.

1. Choices for post secondary school destinations

The findings of this study show that the majority of students, male or female, graduating from secondary education intend to pursue some kind of post secondary education (79.2 %). There is a clear class pattern in the intention to pursue post secondary school education. One in three working class students (33.5%) and 15.5% of lower-middle class students did not intend to pursue further education whereas almost all students coming from professional middle class families were planning to pursue post secondary education. Also, it appears that students from professional middle class families (male and female) tend to have higher aspirations to pursue high professional courses compared with students from lower middle class and working class families.

Clear gender patterns can be observed in the choices as to the kind of higher education male and female students intend to pursue. Female students tend to be more directed to fields such as Education, Humanities, Fine Arts, and Law whereas male students tend to choose to pursue Technology, Engineering, Military and Economics or Business studies. As expected, among the favourable destinations for students from professional middle class families was to have their studies in Britain. As was pointed out, the labour market values and rewards British credentials more than other kinds of higher educational credentials (i.e. from Greek universities). Lower middle class and working class students' favourite higher education destinations are Greece and Cyprus. There are also clear social class and gender patterns in the occupational aspirations of students. Among other findings, we found that most of the students from professional middle class backgrounds aspire to do

professional jobs, almost 40 percent of female lower middle class students expect to do a teaching job whereas most male working class students aspire to follow intermediate, sub-professional or technical jobs.

2. The Cypriot family and its non-monetary capitals

It was expected that middle class families would have more and better 'quality' non-monetary capitals compared with lower social class families. In particular, concerning cultural capital, it was assumed that middle class students would attend more cultural activities, read more 'literature' and possess more recognisably cultural/educational items compared with their peers from lower social classes. Also, it was expected that middle class parents' cultural capital manifested in their knowledge of educational processes and ability to engage successfully with the education system would be more effective than that of lower class parents. The above assumptions have been supported by the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data. The data have also shown that middle class parents have better 'quality' social networks and connections (social capital) and that this can potentially confer educational and other relevant advantages on their children.

The way the above resources, especially social capital, produce benefits for the children's future prospects was considered to be directly connected with parents' adopted attitudes and beliefs in relation to processes of social advancement and gender issues. It was expected that middle class parents would adhere more to 'modern' perspectives in relation to how social advancement may be achieved which includes the rejection of the use of *mesa*, which is generally regarded as being a traditional, anachronistic and backward 'institution'. Also, it was assumed that middle class parents would be more liberal in their attitudes towards the role of men and women in contemporary society. The findings of the qualitative part of the research indicated that things are not as plain and clear-cut as might be thought. Parents, regardless of their social class position, tend to adopt a mixture of different perspectives and attitudes towards the above. Middle class as well as working class parents could be either 'modern' or 'traditional' in relation to the use of social networks (*mesa*) to achieve social aims and 'liberal' or 'conservative' in relation to offering similar opportunities to boys and girls. These would prove to have consequences in the way non-monetary resources and particularly social capital was to be 'used'.

3. *Non-monetary capitals and educational processes*

Students' achievement in secondary education and level of educational aspiration appear to be higher for students from professional middle class families. It was found that these students tended to achieve better grades at school and to have high professional aspirations. This was examined in relation to the fact that middle class students appear to possess more cultural capital (measured by the indicators specified in this study) compared with students from lower social class backgrounds. The question was whether there was a causal link between the two. The regression analysis of the data has shown that it appears that cultural capital measured by students' engagement in cultural activities; ownership of certain educational objects and reading habits has minimal effects both on achievement and on educational aspirations. The effect of social capital in relation to students' educational aspirations was investigated to provide possible explanations on the observed patterns in students' choices. A connection was made in the sense that in families whose social capital is of the kind and 'quality' that can be beneficial in the field of materialising occupational prospects offers students the opportunity to form high educational aspirations.

Parental cultural and social capital was seen as playing a crucial role in the selection and enrolment of students in *frontisteria*. *Frontisteria* appear to play a major part in the educational experiences of most young individuals particularly those who attend public schools. In the present sample the overwhelming majority of the students (80.7%) attended some kind of *frontisteria*. The majority of the students who attend *frontisteria* do so for reasons that directly point to perceived inefficiencies of the state educational system. Professional middle class families tend to pay more for the *frontisteria* of their children, which indicates that these children attend more and/or better 'quality' lessons. Many parents seem to be arguing that the main reason that students attend *frontisteria* is out of a fear that if they do not attend they would miss out in the fierce competition for places on certain courses in Greek universities and the University of Cyprus. In this sense, attendance at such lessons is unrelated to academic performance even though it must be noted that lower middle class and working class students indicated that one of the reasons they attended *frontisteria* was to improve their academic performance.

The availability of familial social capital was found to have significant effects on choice making for future destinations. Around seven in every ten students graduating from secondary education expected their family to help them to secure a job at the end of their educational journey. The higher the social class the more the students expected help from their families. Professional middle class students were more confident than the other two groups that their families would be in a position to help them secure employment. Many students associate the expected help from their family with their family's non-monetary resources and in particular with parents' social networks and connections (social capital). The analysis of parents' responses indicate that the way these resources become available to facilitate choice-making connect directly to prevailing attitudes and beliefs in the family regarding gender roles (liberal versus conservative) and the practise of using social networks and connections to achieve social aims (modern versus traditional). The examination of the above provides interesting explanations as to what lies behind the way choices are made and link social capital to choice making processes. So, the next section examines what lies behind the way choices are made.

9.2.2 What lies behind the way choices are made? The articulation of different forms of capital in the Cypriot society

The availability of different forms of capital to Cypriot families, their articulation and their value in the field of choice making for post secondary destinations within the structures of today's Cyprus, shape to a large extent the life chances of young Greek Cypriots. Within the present social, economic, political and cultural context the process of choice making is influenced by a variety of specific factors connected with available economic, social and cultural capitals. All these shape the different 'horizons of action' for different families whose importance, according to Ball et al (2002), could be both material and perceptual: material, in the sense that they relate to cost and perceptual, in the sense that they refer to 'confidence, awareness and expectation, community and tradition' (2002:55). As with Ball et al (2002), who appeared to articulate with Hodgkinson and Sparkes' (1997) theory of 'pragmatically rational decision-making', the data from the present study also seem to sit comfortably with this notion. For many students the decision to go to university is a non-decision, it is a 'normal biography'. For these families it is something that is taken for granted, an automatic process. Ball et al (2002) also showed that the

capacity for choice is unequally distributed across social classes. For them, habitus rests on class differences in knowledge, experiences, disposition/ position but in the field of higher education choice gender¹ is also important. Male and female students tend to be directed to distinct fields of study largely because of the existence of traditional perspectives which point to stereotypical notions about the roles of men and women in society. These notions impose different prioritisations on the way available capitals are invested for boys and girls which cuts across the social class spectrum.

The different forms of capital (material or non-monetary) acquire specific value within particular social contexts and fields and have the potential to produce substantially different profits for their owners. Cypriot families are located in distinctive social positions within the contemporary Cypriot social structure and these positions signify differences in the possession of various capitals. These capitals are used intentionally or their use has effects, which are unintentional to produce positive outcomes for their possessors in relation to materialising social objectives such as securing occupational prospects for young persons. The Greek Cypriot professional middle class family has the potential to use its capitals more effectively compared with lower social class families. They are able to use them in an additive manner. They can perform more successfully than other social groups what Bourdieu (1986) described as conversion of one form of capital to another. This process points to interesting issues of fungibility between the various forms of capital. The financial capital of the middle classes allows them to 'buy' better education (private education, better 'quality' *frontisteria*) and to pursue activities and own objects that signify a special relationship with knowledge and intellectual pursuits (cultural capital). Furthermore, the parents' social position often offers them the possibility of accessing social networks that can be beneficial as sources of indispensable information for educational processes and prospects, and for materialising the occupational aspirations of their children, by accessing powerful patronage or links to other social networks. Their cultural capital allows them to be more 'selective' than other groups as to the kind of capital needed each time to best promote their families' interests. It is less likely that they would get to a position

¹ Ball et al (2002) include ethnicity as well which throughout the present study was deliberately omitted as a factor that could possibly have an effect on the choices for further education since the present study has dealt with a homogeneous, in terms of ethnicity, group of students.

where they would be forced to make ‘painful’ compromises as to the kind of choices they would make. In this sense their available capitals shape enhanced ‘horizons for action’ relating to their younger members’ future prospects.

It was assumed that non-monetary forms of capital would play a significant role in providing advantages for the Cypriot family. As pointed out above, the findings revealed that student cultural capital (as was indicated by student participation in cultural events, ownership of cultural/educational objects and literary reading habits) do not confer any clear and direct advantages on students in terms of better school achievement and in influencing the formation of high educational aspirations. How can class differentiation in its relation to the above be interpreted? It can be argued that cultural capital signifies an ideological trend of the middle classes; an attachment to Western practices which serve as means for cultural distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). Culture, especially that which is associated with Europe (i.e. engagement in certain cultural activities) signifies an ideological orientation towards what is generally associated with the ideal of ‘Europe’, which often means adherence to modern values in contrast to traditional values mostly associated with Greek-Orthodoxy.

Parental cultural capital, as this is exemplified in their knowledge of educational matters and processes, and in the way they engage with educational practices (involvement in the choice making processes), heavily influences the choices that young people make. This is so because their choices are being made in a family environment where various possible options are explored and ‘exploited’ to produce benefits for children. Also, parental cultural capital allows parents to engage with different ‘quality’ social networks. Those who associate and have access to social networks, which are horizontal in nature, are in advantageous positions because often these relationships are based on the principle of ‘mutual reciprocities’. This is in contrast to lower ‘quality’ social networks which are characterised by a vertical nature which, in many cases, entail dependency and political clientelism. People tend to aim to maximise the benefits they could possibly get from any relationships they may have access to. Loizos (1977) noted three decades ago, that Cypriots try to keep every door open and to ‘exploit’ every possible social relationship to secure the best possible advantages for their children. This holds true today, too. However, today, some have better networks and are better able to exploit the networks they

have access to than others. Within this environment different habituses are shaped that direct individuals to make particular choices.

The availability and the mobilisation of different forms of capital by different families may sometimes be influenced by the students' gender. This relates directly to traditional/conservative versus modern/liberal beliefs found in all levels of the Cypriot social structure about gender issues. The existence of these different viewpoints may make some 'conservative' families, who hold stereotypical ideas on gender issues, more reluctant to invest in or to mobilise the full potential of their resources for female children. This may often discourage female students for making far-reaching choices for higher education. Yet, the present study did not bring to light strong evidence to show that these conservative notions would operate to the point that girls would be deprived of the opportunity to pursue higher education altogether. In fact the analysis shows that female students are equally represented in the number of students intending to pursue higher education.

The reality of the labour market in Cyprus (tightness in relation to access to those positions that are widely considered to be prestigious) gave rise to a social selection mechanism based on the possession of social capital exemplified as familial social connections and networks that may potentially offer support in materialising the educational and occupational aspirations of some young individuals. This was made possible by certain social conditions that have to do with the way social networks and connections have historically been mobilised in the Cypriot society to promote social objectives. The presence or absence of social capital within a family and how effective or productive it is, or is reputed to be, influences in a number of ways the decisions that are being taken in education. It appears that many, mostly in middle class positions who have the resource of social capital available for mobilisation, are better able to cope with the demands of the labour market. Social capital, amongst other, offers them that kind of habitus that shapes an environment for considering a variety of options for higher social goals. For others who lack social capital this constitutes a serious constraint to which they may not have many alternatives to consider. In a social environment where access to power centres determines to a large extent the value of the acquired educational credentials the decision to pursue higher studies is often determined by the prospect of successfully engaging in these networks to 'exchange' these credentials. Inability to access social networks or the

absence of the necessary will to mobilise them inform the different strategies that are developed. Professional middle class families may opt to pursue prestigious education, or less frequently, they may set lower goals for their higher education. A characteristic example where the need for social capital to materialise the acquired educational credentials is minimal is school teaching. Lower classes do not have the same opportunities since inadequate social capital often is accompanied by lack of economic capital, which puts up barriers to the pursuit of higher education since they do not have the potential to consider alternative options². In this way their capitals operate in a restricting manner and thus their 'horizons for action' become limited.

9.2.3 Ideological tensions in the practices of modern Cypriots

The way social capital operates in producing positive or negative outcomes in the field of educational choice raises questions about how it becomes legitimised in the eyes of the disadvantaged in society. Whereas it is fairly easy, in terms of social justice, to recognise and to criticize the unequal distribution of economic capital, which impairs the prospects of the financially worst off in a society, with social (as with cultural) capital things become more complex. It is more complicated to criticize, for instance, unequal distribution and unequal 'quality' of social networks and connections. Partly, this is because many could easily respond to such criticisms by arguing that social networks form 'naturally' as a product of everyday and long-term social engagement. That being true however, the 'system' that allows some to take advantage of their social networks, which provides them with gateways to or reinforcements of social privilege and at the same time deprives others of the opportunity to do the same so that they have to struggle to overcome, at times, insurmountable obstacles, should be given greater attention and exposed. According to Bourdieu (1986) when such processes 'escape observation and control' better transmission and reproduction of power and privilege is maintained. Most parents interviewed in this study seem to acknowledge the importance of social capital to promote social objectives and see little prospects of changing this over time. The issue of its legitimacy connects to traditional perspectives of viewing social relations

² A possible failure in entrance examinations for Greek universities or the University of Cyprus for positions that offer realistic prospects for employment is usually the end in the educational trajectory for many working class students.

within the Cypriot society. This is an issue that sustains an ideological 'conflict' between traditionalists who adhere to such practises and modernists who reject them. Traditional and modern attitudes seem to have an influential position in facilitating educational choice particularly as these attitudes affect the way available capitals are invested to produce possible returns.

It has been suggested that for historical reasons Cypriot society is progressing between two worlds that are in an ideological 'conflict' with each other as both of these worlds signify different perspectives and approaches in everyday practices of modern Cypriots. This had been the fundamental argument behind Argyrou's (1995) study of the way marriage is celebrated in modern Cyprus where he described this conflict as an ideological conflict between the different social classes who appear to adhere to a certain ideology in an effort to appear connected to a particular identity that would distinguish them from the others. In this 'conflict' the middle classes are keen to be seen as endorsing an ideology that sees Western/European culture, values, institutions and practices as being 'modern', something that carries an underlying connotation of superiority. This is in contrast to lower social classes who appear to adhere more to traditional Greek Orthodox values that many view as anachronistic and backward. In everyday social and political life and discourse one frequently comes across incidences that demonstrate this 'conflict'. During the past twenty or so years the introduction of many innovations in the Cypriot society and social life was often accompanied with the label of 'European' as rhetoric for 'modern' in an effort to be successfully introduced³. The simplistic but often quite effective rationale behind this practice is that if Cypriots wish to be viewed as Europeans then surely they should adopt the practices and the institutions⁴ that are found in Europe. This, as was said earlier, had been the driving force behind the introduction of a number of modern innovations in Cyprus and has been intensified as Cyprus seems to be coming ever more closer to becoming a full member of the European Union.

³ Some would argue that the label 'European' replaced the label 'English' although it has to be said that for many people in the middle classes the two are inseparable as to most Cypriots the most familiar impression of Europe relates directly to Britain possibly because of the colonial legacy and the special ties that have been retained with the former colonial ruler or to the use/adherence of British symbols and practices as distinction signs. This must be seen within the context of what has been often characterised as Anglophilia of a part of the middle class which regards everything English as superior (e.g. English education, see extracts from professional/middle classes particularly *UMC 3, 1,2,4* and *LMC11*)

The ideological 'conflict' described above should not be seen as causing polarising effects in the Cypriot society. What appears to be happening is the emergence of a combination of elements of both traditions in the practices of most Cypriots families from all social classes. The middle classes, who, for example, appear to be endorsing Eurocentric practices on many issues (e.g. preference of music, enrolling their children in piano or classical guitar lessons, encouraging children to follow literature, art etc. to name a few) may at the same time hold traditional ideas on gender issues in contemporary society. This was demonstrated in this study when it was pointed out that a large proportion of parents, regardless of their social class, expressed quite conservative/traditional ideas about directing girls to certain channels that they felt were more appropriate for them, in contrast to more liberal/modern views which advocate that girls should be given equal opportunities with boys. This ambiguity has an impact on subsequent practices that parents may adopt in offering help to their children to materialise or to shape their occupational aspirations. If parents adopt conservative attitudes they may consider sons as having a priority over daughters in relation to the kind and level of education that they are offering their children. Thus, they might be prepared to mobilise more resources for them. At the same time these same parents may be offering girls other kinds of help e.g. some form of dowry for marriage, to compensate for this less favourable treatment⁵. This distinction in the priorities for boys and girls does have effects on the way choices are made for post secondary school destinations, in the sense that it offers boys more, and specific kinds of help for the choices made. One kind of help refers to the mobilisation of available social networks and connections.

The different ideological perspectives (*traditional* versus *modern*) with which Cypriot parents view social reality have effects on the way parents perceive the role of social networks and connections to achieve social aims. As with gender issues in contemporary Cyprus one comes across an amalgam of traditional and modern

⁴ Examples include a variety of issues affecting many aspects of everyday life, from these of public transport, to parking practices, environmental issues and many more.

⁵ One may make an observation at this point, which suggests that regarding the practise of offering a 'dowry' to daughters there is a 'traditional' versus 'modern' perception of how best to fulfil that obligation. Working class families may be more inclined to resort to traditional forms of dowry e.g. providing for a house, whereas middle class families may make alternative provisions e.g. financing higher education. This may be interpreted as putting different value in the priorities that different families set for their children. And this, despite the fact that many would argue that dowry is an out-of-date practice. However, there is a strong sense of obligation among many parents originating from tradition to offer as much help as possible to facilitate their daughters in getting married.

practices concerning the application of *mesa* (social connections and networks) to achieve social objectives. The traditional attitude towards the use of *mesa* advocates that their use is a *legitimate* practice. Its legitimacy emanates from the fact that it has been historically embedded in the practices of Cypriots. This perspective sees the use of *mesa* as part of the 'Cypriot' identity. The notion 'that is how we [Cypriots] do things' is used frequently by supporters of that view and expresses vividly this position. On the other hand the *modern* approach sees the use of *mesa* as an anachronism, as an outdated practise that holds the society back and that it constitutes an obstacle to the adoption of meritocratic procedures. The modernist position tends to identify itself with meritocratic procedures and calls for legitimacy through 'objective' and 'transparent' procedures. In fact, for modernists, objectivity and transparency are fundamental qualities of meritocratic procedures. The findings of this study have indicated that it is very difficult to associate a particular social group with one or another perspective. For example there is a proportion of the middle classes that regards the use of social connections and networks as backward, anachronistic and pre-modern. Yet, when it comes to the 'cruel reality' (this was the way many have described the reality of what is actually happening in terms of people seeking to mobilise networks and connections), the rhetoric against this institution is forgotten and these parents clearly declare that they would resort to this resource because not doing so would deprive their children of the chance to compete on 'equal' grounds in a competitive labour environment. There were also parents from different social class groups that expressed readiness to resort to using *mesa*, even though acknowledged the fact that they were an outdated and, in some cases, unjust institution. Willingness to resort (or not to resort for that matter) to the use of *mesa* was an element that had consequences for the kind of choices that were taken for future educational and occupational destinations. The unequal way with which social capital becomes available for use between social classes acts as a selection mechanism that clearly favours some groups and disadvantages others. Thus, it constitutes one of the main sources of social injustice in Cyprus today and raises questions about the current state of social justice in Cyprus to be addressed in the next section.

9.3 The consequences of choice making in education for social justice in the Cypriot society

In this section speculative remarks are made, by discussing the consequences of the forms and structuring of choice making in education for social justice in the Cypriot society. It has to be acknowledged that the educational system as such does act as a selection mechanism to a certain extent in the way it is structured. Reforms do not seem to address this function of the educational system. For example, under the new system of *Enieo Lykeio (Unified Lyceum)*, put in place shortly after the empirical investigation of this study (2001), the institution of *frontisteria*, which many regard as contributing to differential educational outcomes, is expected to continue to dominate the educational experiences of secondary school students and their families as nobody really expects that there will be a significant change in this institution in the foreseeable future (see parents comments on the issue). This is because the Unified Lyceum does not constitute a radical reform of the secondary education. Under the 'new' system students are asked to choose particular subjects from various groups of subjects instead of selecting fixed groups of subjects (specialisations). Depending on the chosen subjects 'unofficial' academically and vocationally oriented streams are created, which appear to continue to be 'needing' the support of *frontisteria* and which direct students to particular post school destinations.

In theory, education should offer 'equal opportunities' to all, but in reality what this study has demonstrated is that some routes are restricted to the middle class students. These routes, incidentally, are the ones most highly rewarded in the labour market (British and to a lesser degree American universities). Even the private tertiary college education, which seems to be an option particularly for a group of lower middle class students, is out of bounds for working class students due to the costs entailed. For academically able working class students the route that is mostly available to them is the public institutions in Greece and Cyprus, the entrance to which is after very competitive examinations, particularly in some courses such as primary education. The latter route offers chances for immediate employment but also does not require the help of social connections and networks. The choices that are being made for post secondary school destinations reveal interesting gender patterns that re-enforce stereotypical notions of the role of men and women in the Cypriot society. This works to the disadvantage of women, who, even though they

have managed to advance quite a lot during the past three generations, have not yet reached the point of being offered similar opportunities as men.

9.3.1 The different ‘horizons for action’ for Cypriot families and how they affect the life chances of young people

The findings of this research point to the conclusion that the choices that young people and their families make occur within different ‘horizons for action’ (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). The choices of young graduates can be seen as being made within frameworks that are shaped by available familial capitals. The available capitals shape various potentials (perceived and real) and influence their future prospects in the labour market. Economic capital, even though very important, is not always the exclusive determinant as higher studies in the public institutions in Greece and Cyprus are free at the point of delivery. It is certainly a constraint for other routes namely studies at British and American universities, which are mostly available to high-income professional middle class families (and to a lesser degree to lower middle class families) who can afford the high costs of such an endeavour. Other routes that are clearly not open to all are the private higher education sector in Cyprus that has to be paid for but which up to the present day does not confer titles and degrees that are recognised by the state.

The findings of the empirical investigation of this study indicate that there are clear gender and social class patterns in the pursuit of higher education. It appears that female students tend to pursue higher education in equal numbers giving a picture of relative equality of opportunity for both sexes. Looking into the kinds of choices that male and female students make reveals another picture. The male students tend to be oriented to courses leading to ‘traditional’ professions whereas the female students to social sciences and, in particular, to teaching. One interesting chosen field of study for female students is primary school teaching. It represents the field of study where the need for social networks is completely non-existent⁶. For many, however, it is a compromise as Mrs Litsa (WC 21) very vividly pointed out when she commented on why there are so many students interested in becoming teachers:

... that is why all children want to become teachers. Because they feel that the only thing that if you manage to enter, there aren’t any *mesa*, it’s becoming a teacher. And then the competition is very fierce. And what kind of job is a teacher? It is not that important. My daughter has so much knowledge and

⁶ This is so because appointments are made through an appointment list which cannot be bypassed by using individualistic social networks.

abilities that her teachers don't agree that she should go to become a teacher. Because she went to *Praktiko* [science specialisation], she did not go to classics, because she likes those lessons. She should have gone to political studies. *But who is going to help her from then on?*

Another noticeable choice of female students, that raises questions is law, a profession that has been traditionally male dominated. A possible explanation for this trend may lie in what some parents argued, that is that the home environment tends to be more flexible with women about the choices they make because they are not seen as having the pressure to secure employment after their studies. It appears that because in the legal profession there is an oversupply of young graduates the prospects for immediate employment are grim. As a result many law professionals, especially the younger ones, are struggling to 'survive'. Under these conditions women can 'cope' better for the following reason⁷. The predominant perspective is that women can afford to remain unemployed or not in full time employment, something that cannot be said for male students. The stereotypical notion that the man is the primary provider for the family and the woman the one who provides supplementary support is still quite dominant in Cyprus where, incidentally, the institution of marriage is still widely followed by the young generation. This 'pushes' men to make pragmatic choices that offer the best possible prospects for employment. This reality shapes to a considerable extent the 'horizons for choice' of male students. In other words the horizons for action for individuals are shaped by available capitals but equally by perceptions, attitudes and beliefs relating to the application of these capitals and their effectiveness in materialising future prospects.

9.3.2 Can education bring about social justice in the Cypriot society?

Over the past century education served as a means for upward social mobility for a large section of the Cypriot society which moved from the agrarian mode of production at the beginning of the 20th century to the dominance of the services sector today. As shown in Appendix B where the educational and occupational attainment of the parents of the students included in this study is compared with that

⁷ Although not all women can equally do that as the following personal experience with a female fellow student-teacher shows. While I was training as a teacher at the Pedagogical Academy of Cyprus from 1989-92 I met a mature fellow student teacher. To my astonishment I found out that she had been a lawyer with licence to practise before she came to the PAC. When I asked her what made her make such an 'astonishing' move she replied that since she got her licence to practice law she had been working as a secretary in a law firm because that was the only place and the only job that was available at the time. 'At least as a teacher I will have more dignity as a professional' was her answer to my question.

of their own fathers, many experienced substantial upward social mobility. Furthermore, the issue of education serving as a means for upward social mobility came about in many personal accounts of the parents interviewed and which are presented in section 7.4.1. Could this alone be a sign of a society that achieves social justice for its members? I would like to argue that this is not necessarily the case.

Any society that claims to pursue the goal of achieving social justice for all its members particularly the less well off should basically aim to reduce over time the relevant difference in the possession of different 'commodities' on offer, either material or social, between those who originate from better off social positions and those who originate from the lower sections of the social ladder (Figure 9.1). If the trend of what is happening in society is the opposite, that is if the relative difference between the worst off and the better off is increasing, making those at the bottom layers of the society a little better compared with their parents but those at the top positions of the ladder much better compared with their parents, increasing the gap between the better off and the worst off in society, then it must be concluded that that society and those who lead it are failing to deliver genuine social justice (Figure 9.2). A society that wants to be seen as one that makes real social progress should aim to deal with institutions, practices and processes that deprive the lower classes of equalizing opportunities for social success. To which model is the Cypriot society closer? Is the Cypriot society a society that effectively promotes social justice? This study has indicated that it fails, at least in one field; that of providing equal opportunities for choice in education.

The above needs to be viewed within a context of a society that underwent a process of massive transformation of its structure, which altered its traditional social and economic structures, which characterised an agrarian society. What appears to be happening in contemporary Cyprus is that over time various processes of class consolidation have been put in place. Education appears to be central to that process. However, rather than exclusively focusing on the educational system as being the mechanism of social and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 1996) we need to recognise the significant role institutions and structures located in the wider society play in influencing the process of social selection. This point is further explained below.

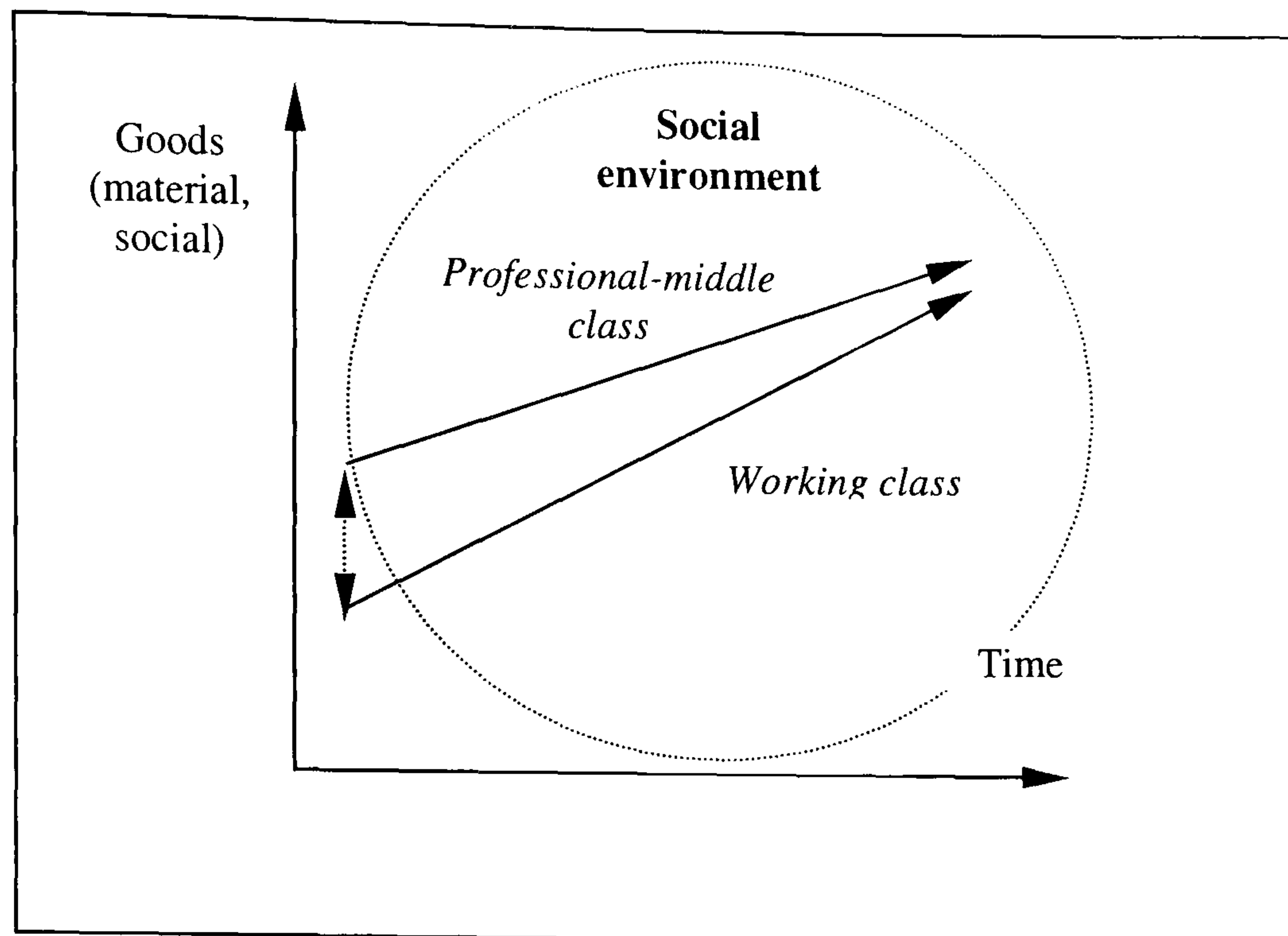


Figure 9.1: The trend in a society that achieves promoting policies for social justice

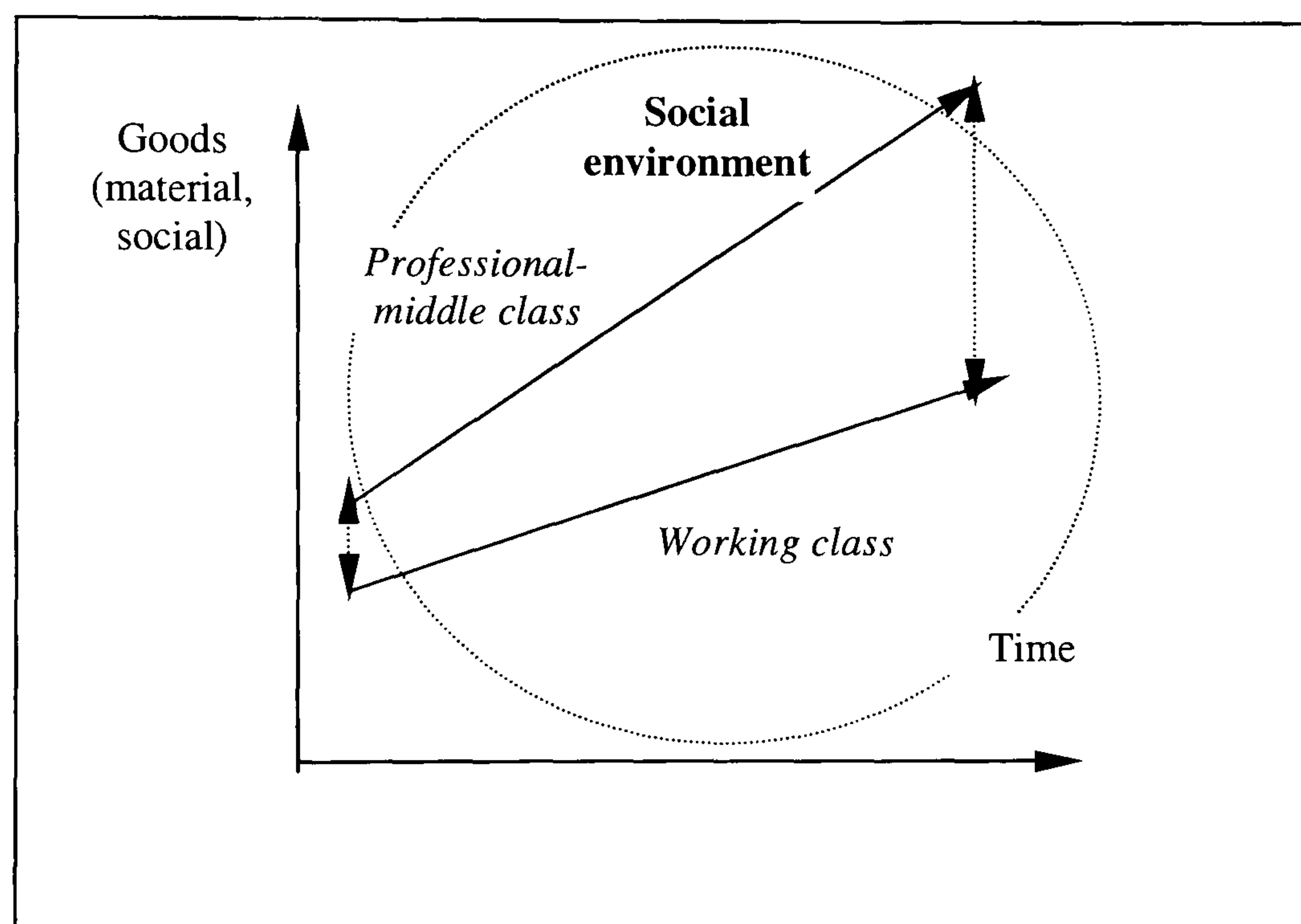


Figure 9.2: The trend in a society that fails to promote policies for producing social justice

Writing nearly half a century ago Young (1958), in *The Rise of Meritocracy*, offered a critique of *meritocracy* indicating its ideological and political potential as a way of reinforcing and disguising the reproduction of power and domination. Thus, not unlike the implications of much of Bourdieu's work, Young (1985:56) commented that to succeed with education, a broader social revolution was needed which would overthrow the established hierarchy, values and everything associated with the privileged classes that was offering them more and better opportunities to succeed. In the modern world, one can appreciate that social revolutions are an unlikely prospect to say the least. It appears that today, through education alone, an individual cannot

succeed in the social and educational arena. This is a fact that is more widely recognised. Roy Nash (1999:123-124) suggests that

there is a crisis in contemporary sociology of education due to the fact that the most widely accepted theories do not acknowledge the overwhelming empirical evidence that by far the greatest proportion of the observed variance in educational attainment and access to education associated with social class does not have its origin in the educational system.

According to Nash it is the generative power of social class, conceptualised as a set of structures of social relationships that constitutes the major cause of socially differentiated educational attainment. For Nash the economic, cultural and political structures affect families, students and schools and shape strategic responses of families and their offspring to maintain their economic, cultural and social position. Hence, this calls for an appreciation of those social structures that shape for individuals diverse 'horizons for action' in which to exercise their choice making. And even though, as was pointed out in Chapter 2, Nash regards Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* as incorporating a determinist theory of social and educational reproduction, he nevertheless regards *habitus* as

an invitation to observe and analyse the experiences of social agents in order to gain knowledge of the ways in which social structures have their effect on practice (Ibid: 124).

The fact that institutions and structures in the wider social context appear to play a significant role in social reproduction was, in fact, the conclusion reached by Tsoulouvi (1984) in the case of Greece. She pointed out that in Greece, educational institutions and cultural practices play little part in social selection. She came to the conclusion that it was the particular structures in Greek society that allowed for social reproduction to take place and particularly the presence in the family of a particular 'privilege' (assets) relating to access to powerful patronage networks (social capital). Tsoulouvi (1984) mentioned a study of a sample of students at Athens University in which students perceived that social success was achieved primarily by the differential access of individuals to 'mesa'. The present study too, some 25 years on, has shown that accessing effective social networks is by no means equal to all social groups but depends largely upon the social class of the family and its position within various networks with powerful centres of distribution of favours, opportunities and other social goods.

In a similar fashion, within the Cypriot society today, there are institutions and practices that deprive young persons from the lower social classes of the

opportunities to aim to achieve a socially higher position. In a society that values higher education, on many occasions it is perceived that educational credentials without the support of 'proper' social connections may have little or no value at all. Thus, their value is often dependent on this form of social capital the shortage of which among the lower classes, discourages them from pursuing higher education or is compromising their ambitions by making choices that do not take them as high as their abilities might otherwise have taken them. This could have long-term consequences for a society on at least two levels. One is at the level of failing to achieve social justice for all its members, something that creates sentiments of disaffection and discontent. At a pragmatic 'economic' level it has long-term consequences for a society whose economy relies on its younger members as its main resource for a future that many argue lies in the services provided by a very capable human workforce to the European and international market.

Consequently, the simple answer to the question posed at the beginning of this section '*Can education bring about social justice in the Cypriot society?*' must surely be somewhat cynical in the sense that with the given social conditions and structures in society, education on its own cannot bring about social justice. There are constraints, which originate mainly from outside the educational system and have their routes in values, practices and institutions that have historically developed in Cyprus, which relate to the mobilisation of social networks and connections. As long as these connections and networks are prerequisites or are perceived to be prerequisites in order to promote social goals that directly link with materialising occupational and social aspirations, the goal of social justice will suffer significant setbacks.

9.4 The articulation of the different forms of capital

This thesis set out to address two interrelated themes: a) the empirical investigation of the way individuals and their families go about to make their choices for future educational and occupational destinations and b) the conceptual development of the theoretical concepts of capital, habitus and field, as proposed by Bourdieu, which facilitate social action. The focus on non-monetary capitals allowed for the close consideration of social structures located in society that affect choice making in

education. Apart from the specific findings of this study, there are wider reflections to be made about how capital, field and habitus interconnect to produce social action. The examination of the interconnections between economic, social and cultural capital and habitus offers a fresh perspective into how social action appears in a given social field.

9.4.1 Responding on Bourdieu's focus on cultural capital

At the beginning of this study and because the primary focus had been on non-monetary forms of capital it might have been reasonable to expect that cultural capital, following its prominent place in social theory and particularly in the field of educational processes, would have a principal position in the search for explanations as to what determines individual social action and, in this case, educational choices. In his work *The forms of capital* (1986), Bourdieu draws our attention to the value of non-monetary capitals and he seems to be focusing more and developing more fully the concept of cultural capital. Compared to cultural capital, social capital appears to get less attention and it is not developed to the same extent as cultural capital is in his work. What this study suggests is that there is a case to be made for linking social capital and social structure with cultural capital. Such an approach draws attention to close consideration of the social positions individuals and families occupy within the various social networks in a particular social class structure. In fact, cultural capital acquires differential value and relevance by being closely associated with the relative positioning of individuals and families in various social networks. These social positions often provide individuals and families with the *potential* to differentially 'exploit' their non-monetary capitals and particularly to differentially profit from engagement with various social networks. In other words, the differential access to various social networks denotes the presence of diverse 'qualities' in the social capital available to individuals and families to be used in the educational *field*. Effective social capital offers access to information, potential for privileges and favouritism etc. and facilitates social action at a given time. Its availability (or unavailability) allows for a particular *habitus* to form in relation to offering, among other things, relative certainty, for instance, in the dispositions towards and sense of possibility for eventually materialising the choices made. Thus, habitus allows for the formation of extended or restricted 'horizon for action' in the field of choice making.

9.4.2 Capital, habitus and social action

The interrelationship of cultural and social capital and their link to *habitus* and *field* provide useful ideas to address the classic sociological debate of what determines social action. In Chapter 2 it was stated that Goldthorpe's Rational Action Theory, which views the individuals as totally free agents able to make choices by weighing the pros and cons of an action had not been particularly convincing. Nor had structuralist/ deterministic theories that structures impose on individuals, a course of action to which the individual has little or no choice but to follow a determined route. A middle ground was sought. Contrary to criticisms that Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* entails determinism (Nash, 1995, 1999), this study saw *habitus* as a concept that referred to the dynamics of processes in which individuals make decisions within frameworks that are shaped by, among other things, available capitals (assets). These capitals may be used intentionally or have unintended consequences in facilitating or restricting social action and thus influencing the process of choice making for post secondary school destinations. *Habitus* itself was seen as a dynamic concept, which makes possible the production of social action at a given moment. Contrary to Bourdieu's early assumptions, which saw habitus primarily as the product of socialisation not easily transformed, Reay's (1998) notion, that *habitus* is a dynamic concept that has no finality, was adopted. This approach sees *habitus* as constantly being formed and transformed by changes in each individual's circumstances. It can be argued that the availability of various resources (economic, social and cultural capitals) is part of the changing circumstances of individuals. In a later work Bourdieu himself seems to be suggesting this indirectly (1998: 25). With non-monetary capital in particular, the principles by which these capitals are being used have the potential to produce differential outcomes. Social capital, which connects with social structures, and cultural capital, which connects with individual knowledge and 'abilities' to engage successfully in these structures, and their interrelation with an ever-changing *habitus* (dispositions of mind and body), constitutes key components of the 'horizons for action' for most individuals.

And so, working in a framework similar to that of Gambetta (1987) and in a similar way to Lynch and O' Riordan (1998), it was found that social structures formulate a general framework for action (decision making). Individuals whose resources are often linked to these structures (such as in the case of social capital), and through the *habitus* they develop as a result of their particular circumstances make their

educational choices. Agents (working class students for example) are not following rules in pre-determined, robot-like manner. Rather

... structures specify the general parameters within which decisions are made but the latter are, in turn, negotiated and changed depending on institutional responses to particular actions. Working class students do not 'give up' on the education system in some predetermined manner. Rather, they negotiate and inhabit the education system with an eye to the opportunities which are open and those which are not. (Lynch and O' Riordan, 1998: 474)

Thus, choice making takes place within different 'horizons for action' (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997 and Hodkinson, 1998). According to Hodkinson, pragmatic decision-making is rooted in turning points in the life of a person where the habitus of the person is transformed. Cultural and social factors influence the nature of dispositions, which, in turn, both enable and constrain a particular decision through the horizons for action. Hatcher (1998) also seems to be coming to similar conceptual conclusions when he says that to understand the way choices are made in education we need to see habitus, institution and rational action in a dialectical relationship, at the centre of a comprehensive model capable of explaining different scenarios of educational choice i.e. a generative theory.

The influence of middle class familial habitus is crucial in directing students to make choices in a 'context of certainty' (Reay, 1998). The prospect of a well thought of university education is, for most middle class students, something that usually is more or less taken for granted. As for working class students, this is not the case. They have to face different barriers in accessing and succeeding in higher education, as the study of Lynch and O'Riordan (1998) has shown in the case of Irish education. Lynch and O'Riordan (1998) identified three types of barriers: economic, educational and social and cultural and the combination of these three factors, with economic constraints having the greater significance, were found to be barriers to higher education. Some working class students never contemplate higher education and others who are qualified to do so (in terms of their good academic performance) make choices that are not particularly risky or far-reaching, simply because they do not have those resources that would compensate for a failure or a setback. Effective social and cultural capital when present in ample amounts, I would argue, not only constitutes a major resource that facilitates educational choice but it can also point to alternative directions for post school destinations, thus constituting a compensatory resources or safety-net against possible setbacks. In this way it contributes to the creation of an environment of relative security, which partly shapes the formation of

individual and collective *habitus* for choice making. Thus, moving away from economic constraints (but never ignoring its principal contribution), this study has brought attention to non-monetary capitals, which when present, influence positively the life chances of young individuals but if not available in ample amounts and if not of the ‘right’ property to individuals and their families, can seriously impair their life chances.

9.5 Reflections of this study and implications for further research

At the end of a research project one cannot but reflect on the methods followed and the issues that were investigated and to discuss possibilities that arise for future research projects. This study points to many directions that future research projects may take, not least the need for more in depth work. Among these are issues that refer not only to several specific educational matters in the Cypriot social setting but also to issues of general sociological inquiry.

In the introduction to this study I referred to my uneasiness about the choices that I made in relation to my personal post secondary education and how that reflected partly on my interest in the issues examined in this research. Throughout the past four and a half years, during the course of conducting the research and then writing the thesis, many things that I examined made me reflect on my own personal educational and occupational trajectory and that of my brothers. I became aware that our trajectories had been heavily influenced by my family’s limitation in the possession of ample amounts of that kind of social capital that would direct us in setting higher goals for our future. Certainly, academic ability was not a preventive issue as all of us were high achievers in secondary school but, as I have argued in this study, academic ability is not in itself enough to guarantee success. My family’s lacking of ‘effective’ social capital, mainly due to my parents’ biographies, had its consequences in the choices that my brothers and I made for our future. My father was never actively involved in political parties or similar organised groups, which are considered to be potential providers of social ‘goods’. Having said the above, my father had connections with our local town bishopric due to his involvement with the local parish church.

As mentioned earlier, all of my brothers were top achievers at secondary school. How did we choose to exchange these successes for social achievement? By making modest but secure choices, which did not particularly require the help of 'mesa'. I followed in my fathers' footsteps' by becoming a teacher. Two of my brothers entered military schools and joined the army as officers. One of my brothers studied at the Higher Technical Institute of Cyprus and joined a semi-public organisation as a technician. That brother had to go through a process of selection. Fearing interventions in favour of other candidates and despite the fact that my brother had graduated from the HTI ranking second in his year, my father, who had always been against practices involving mobilisation of social networks, reluctantly had to resort to our local Bishop, to whom he was personally acquainted, to ask for his help so as to make sure that my brother was given a 'fair' chance. This was a position that I came across with other parents in this study. They were, in principle, against the use of social connections and networks to promote social goals but when faced with the 'cruel reality', as some had described it, they were not sure whether they would keep to that principle. In other words, this position does not ask for favours as such but rather seeks for reassurances that other's using social connections and networks would not impair their own possibility of being given a fair chance for success. The positive result in my brother's case was partly due to the power of the Church, which, as was commented upon in other sections of this study has influence on different aspects of social life, and also due to the fact that the position under pursuit was not particularly prestigious (intermediate-level technician) thus allowing, for 'lower' forms of social capital to be effective too.

Apart from the personal reflections that can be made relating to the issues under investigation one cannot but reflect on the way this study developed and to speculate what the outcomes might have been if different approaches had been followed. One such issue refers to the fact that this study did not explore in detail students (and their families) that were particularly disaffected by the education system as was indicated by some, mostly male students, who failed to respond adequately to the questionnaire. This group would have been a very interesting group to investigate. Here a question arises of whether to pursue interesting relevant issues when they come up in the process of a research project. Should the research design be flexible enough in order to move into such interesting directions? The interest in this instance

is the fact that it could be the case that part of the above students' disaffection might be attributed to the lack of non-monetary resources and particularly social capital. Could this be part of what makes them disengage from a system from where they see no real prospects? This could be an interesting issue to follow up in another research project.

Another aspect that this study did not explore in-depth and merits further research is the kind of reciprocities that arise from involvement in social networks. One can appreciate that part of the effectiveness of social capital comes from the reciprocities that are inevitably linked with involvement in social networks. For example how well individuals and families manage to 'exploit' their networks and connections could be influenced by the willingness and 'ability' to repay the 'goods' that are secured through them in a number of ways. The examination of such an issue involves examining the role of social capital in other areas of social activity in contemporary Cyprus. How does social capital facilitate different social pursuits? This examination could take place in view of what many regard as changing cultural practices in the Greek Cypriot society, which involves the rationalisation (modernisation) of social processes. An interesting aspect of this investigation could be the nature and the processes whereby certain social groups resist such changes. Finally, another issue that a future study of the way social capital influences wider social processes could focus more closely on, is the micro-processes at the level of the family. In a follow up research to the present study one might investigate how the availability of various non-monetary resources interplay with parent-children interaction to shape the choice for future destinations among other educational processes.

The above relate to wider issues of sociological inquiry and call for further exploration of the inter-relationship of various non-monetary resources. How do these resources affect the formulation of *habitus* in the production of social action? Focusing on particular families could do this. A sample of families could be selected on which to carry out a qualitative study with a longitudinal character, in order to examine different parameters that frame the educational practices of some families that limit or enhance the ability of students to make choices as to their future destinations. Parents, as well as students, would need to be included in the design of the project to get similar stories from different perspectives. Looking at the product of the qualitative part of this research, it would be very interesting to investigate people's personal stories, experiences and feelings. People's stories provide

challenging data in the sense that they shed light on processes that quantitative data alone might not be able to explore adequately. This was demonstrated in this study when students' answers to the questionnaire indicated that the majority of them expected some help from their family but the nature and the processes of this 'help' became evident through analysis of data derived from interviewing parents. Such a study would offer more in-depth insights into intra-familial practices that many would argue incorporate the micro-level mechanisms whereby social reproduction occurs in society.

Reflecting on this study, that has been a significant (and at times dominant) part of my life during the past five years and the final outcome, I must admit that it was a time extremely well spent because it has contributed to my development as a person, sociologist and researcher. To start with it allowed me to relate social theories, ideas and concepts with everyday social and educational experiences of people in a society where I intend to pursue my future career. I expect that this work will be the starting point for my personal long-term engagement with issues that touch the core of people's worries and concerns in relation to their position in society and the structures of opportunities that become available to them for social success. In that effort my personal development as a researcher has been extremely important. In my undergraduate and MA studies I was trained in a way that was directing me to become a follower of the quantitative 'scientific' research tradition. In fact, when I was starting this project this was my initial intention and it had been part of the reason for my attempt to operationalise, for example, cultural capital in quantitative manner. The analysis has indicated that students' cultural capital measured using the particular indicators adopted, as I put it in Chapter 9 'do not confer any clear and direct advantages on students in terms of better school achievement and in influencing the formation of high educational aspirations' (p.262) Does this mean that the cultural capital theory is invalidated or put into doubt? Not necessarily. During the process of conducting this research I have come to recognise the powerful exploratory and explanatory potentials of qualitative methodologies. This led me to explore other facets of cultural capital present in the home environment, which articulate with specific educational processes to influence positively or negatively, the prospects of young individuals. In this sense my own 'horizons' have broadened and had made me open to make use of the potential that qualitative research methods of data collection and analysis can offer to the study of issues relating to the pursuit

of social justice in the Cypriot society. In my future research projects where I intend to take the issues that I referred to in the previous paragraph further I intend to make the most of what I have learnt from this extremely educative and challenging experience.

9.6 Concluding remarks

This study examined issues of choice making in education in contemporary Cyprus. It suggests that there are different patterns of choice making in relation to future educational destinations based on students' social class and gender. Official statistics, as published by the Department of Statistic and Research of the Republic of Cyprus, present a picture of relative openness in higher education, in the sense that it shows an increasing number of students (male and female) progressing to higher education. And in some respects there has been progress, if one compares, for example, the situation prevailing until the first decades of the twentieth century when women did not go to school at all, and within just three generations today nearly half the higher education population is female. But a close examination of the choices young individuals and their families make for their future and the social forms in which they are embedded, reveals a more complex picture. Different families employ different practices and are differentially able to 'invest' resources they have available in distinctive ways in the education of their offspring.

Apart from the dynamics that are created within the family, I have argued that there is a covert mechanism, which influences the decisions that are being taken regarding the education of the students, which originates mainly from outside the family. It consists of the available social capital of the family, in the form of social networks and connections that can provide the vital context for the educational credentials to be exchanged in the labour market for social positions. But these social networks have differential consequences for different families. This is happening for two reasons: a) Social capital is unequally distributed among families in different social classes putting those professional middle classes who have better quality social networks in a better position to make choices aiming higher, b) the lack of social capital is dealt with more effectively by the middle classes in the sense that they have the possibility to adopt compensatory measures (by mobilising their cultural and

financial capital) whereas those families from lower classes do not have similar options to consider.

With respect to social justice, this thesis takes a critical view of the way the Cypriot society works today. It challenges the notion that education offers equal opportunities to everybody and that it offers a way to success through academic achievement. Education is not an isolated institution within society. It is affected deeply by intrinsic inequalities that are present in society which relate to the unequal distribution of various resources. Outside the family there are social dynamics and institutions that limit the opportunities of some families who lack appropriate social capital to take advantage of what the educational system has to offer and in particular to aim at goals that would offer them high rates of upward social mobility. For some, the lack of social capital compromises students' ambitions and the aspirations that they may have for future educational plans. The distribution of social capital in its present form acts as a selection mechanism, as a mechanism of social reproduction that favours some elite and privileged groups while at the same time serves to deprive the less privileged of the opportunity to compete on equal grounds in the social arena. Not only that, it has become a legitimised process that remains unchallenged for the most part since many are seeking ways to access them in any way they can. But not all are equally capable of having that resource available for use. This situation, to those who support the rationalisation of the Cypriot society, constitutes a major impediment to the society's move to modernity.

If there is a genuine willingness to promote social justice in Cypriot society, something that theoretically has always been advocated by politicians and all the governments, consideration should be given to compensatory measures being adopted that would limit the institutions that allow for some to be securing advantages based on inter-personal, inter-familial connections with powerful social networks. There must be a serious effort to make educational and occupational selection processes as transparent as possible. Every irregularity should be uncovered and put right. People who are clearly done an injustice should not remain passive under the delusive notion that their turn would eventually come (as was often commented on in parents' interviews) because it will clearly not be available to everybody. This institution exists to serve the few privileged with the 'right' connections and to exclude those who lack this resource. Not all are in social positions that can create equally effective social networks. For instance, if the nature

of social networks between people from unequal social standings is vertical in character, which often entails relationships based on dependency and political clientelism, the potential profits might be limited.

It would be utopian to assume that the traditional practice of using social networks and connections to achieve social objectives that is so deeply embedded in the cultural identity of many Greek Cypriots would cease to exist in the short-term future. Modern and rational practices should replace traditional practices in this instance where young people would be able to aim for their preferred positions with the determining criterion being who they are and not who they know. In this way young individuals and their families from all social backgrounds would have the confidence that would allow them to make choices within extended 'horizons for action'. With this there would be better utilisation of that country's resource that many regard as the primary source of prosperity for a country with limited natural resources: its people.

This study aims to contribute to the pursuit of social justice in society. The fact that it is highly unlikely to ever have a society that has complete social justice should not stop us for getting as close as possible to that ideal. The Greek poet Kavafys once wrote that the route to Ithaca has more to offer than Ithaca itself (which could be an utopia after all). The creation of a society where one may come across 'absolute' social justice could be a utopia under present, perhaps any, circumstances. Aiming towards that ideal, however, should be a pragmatic and noble goal for those who are sensitive and care about social equality. Social scientists who support this goal should be critical of all those institutions and practices that limit the chances for everybody to get a fair chance of social success in society. The recognition of these realities by more people could generate a source of tension in the society, which would push for the adoption of compensatory measures that would aim to ameliorate social injustices. This may be seen as the primary contribution of this study to contemporary Cypriot society. This study has shown that in modern Cyprus there are institutions and practices, the '*mesa*', that allow for social capital to be a significant mechanism for sustaining social injustices. Social capital contributes to social reproduction taking place and depriving Cypriot society's less privileged members of fair chances to realise their full potential. In the long run this will certainly impair the society's goal for achieving more progress and prosperity.

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Appendix A

The development of Cyprus in the political, economic and class structure during the 20th century

A.1 The political development of Cyprus

For nearly three centuries (1571-1878) Cyprus was part of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman state was a system that relied heavily on tax collection. Its subjects especially the non-Moslems (Greek Orthodox Christians) were subjected to heavy taxation. For convenience of control the Ottomans invested the head of the Church, the Archbishop, with the dignity and the civil responsibility of leadership of his people as the *ethnarch*. Among his responsibilities were the allocation of the revenue burdens among the communities and the collection of taxes. In that system lay the foundations of the political power of the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus, a power which was retained for much of the past two centuries.

The British arrived in Cyprus in 1878 following a secret agreement with the Ottomans at the Berlin Convention of 1878. They ruled Cyprus for nearly 50 years as managing directors of an Ottoman province. When the Ottoman Empire allied itself with the Central Powers the British annexed Cyprus on November 15, 1914. On March 1925 Cyprus became officially a British colony. Since the British occupied Cyprus primarily for geostrategic interests, at first they were little concerned with the existing social and economic conditions (Choisi, 1995). The British administration showed no particular interest in Cyprus and its people but saw the island as an important post to secure the interests of their empire at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly regarding the travelling routes to India (Persianis, 1994).

From the beginning the new rulers did not recognise the ethnarchical role of the Church. This sparked a continuous conflict between the British and the Church that lasted until the Independence of Cyprus, reaching its climax during 1955-59 when the Church played a leading role in the anti-colonial struggle¹.

During the British rule in Cyprus, a Greek Cypriot political class developed which was unrelated to, and mostly in opposition, to the colonial government. The mainstream political class of the Greek Cypriots, according to Christodoulou (1995), was under the aegis of the Church, which though formally unrecognised by the British, continued the ethnarchic role, acquired under the Ottoman rule. The main ideology was nationalism and its objective was union of Cyprus with Greece (*enosis*)². Apart from the fact that the Orthodox Church was the

¹ The first serious confrontation between Greek Cypriots and the British administration, known as the *Oktovriana* (the October [incidents]), took place in 1931 when, following the uncovering of a scandal regarding taxation, riots broke out and Greek Cypriots burned down the residence of the British governor. The real reason behind this violent confrontation according to Choisi (1995), came after the British colonial administration rejected numerous attempts by the Greek Cypriot upper class (the people that were close to the Church) to push for more political decision-making power for the Legislative Council (a council that was established by the British when they arrived in Cyprus and its function was only consultative as the real power was in the hands of the Governor) and for the local government levels. The British were by no means ready to make any concessions concerning the extending of political powers in favour of the Cypriot elite.

² According to Choisi (1995:37), *enosis*, was taken as an ideology by the Greek Cypriot elite and was used as ideological basis of legitimacy to achieve their political interests which were the strengthening of their political position as leaders of the Greek Cypriot community. Through the strengthening of cultural identity aided by an ideological nationalism the elite of the period secured its influence. The Cyprus's Greek-Orthodox Church functioned as the main "sponsor of Hellenistic culture" and seized *enosis* as a cultural-political, ideological weapon and through that it re-entered the political scene. The reason for this, according to Choisi (1995), was because it wanted to avoid a "meaningless existence" in a secularised society, which began to develop slowly under British influence in a more modern, capitalistically structured society.

custodian of the Greek nationalistic ideology it was also the largest landowner (and rentier) on the island. Panayiotopoulos (1995) writes that the power of the Church in society rested upon a mass Greek Cypriot peasantry over whom it maintained a high level of material and moral control. One key intermediary through whom the Church exercised moral control over the peasantry and village organisation was the village schoolteacher. Many were educated in Greece and they brought to Cyprus the mainland Greek nationalism that was actively promoted by the Church.

After the Independence of Cyprus in 1960 the Church continued to play a leading role in the society. The election of Archbishop Makarios III as the first president of the newly established Republic of Cyprus was the leading expression of the dominance of the Church in the political developments in the Cypriot society. This dominance remained in place until the death of Makarios in 1977.

The newly Independent Cypriot state was soon shaken by troubles. The Turkish Cypriot community of the island, that constituted 18 per cent of the population, reacted forcibly to an attempt by President Makarios to propose a thirteen-point amendment to the constitution. Inter-communal clashes broke out in 1964 that resulted in Turkish-Cypriots withdrawing from the government and the public service. The capital, Nicosia, was divided in two whereas the Turkish Cypriots settled in enclaves in certain parts of the island living in relative isolation from the Greek Cypriots. Since then a UN peace keeping force has been stationed in Cyprus - the longest serving UN force in the history of the UN. Inter-communal talks have failed to give any fruitful solution.

The period 1967-74 was a troublesome period for the Cypriot state for another reason. The military junta in Athens tried on many occasions to undermine the Cypriot state and President Makarios who was one of its strongest critics. With them a group of ex-EOKA militants joined, people who were discontent because they were excluded from the privileges (mostly posts in governmental positions) that were distributed in the newly established state. In July 1974 the military government of Greece organised a coup against the legal government of Cyprus. Turkey invaded the island and occupied the northern part of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus. The Turkish troops forced the Greek population to move to the southern part of the island and the Turkish population to move to the northern part of the island. The Turkish-Cypriots, with the support of Turkey have attempted to declare the occupied territories of the Republic of Cyprus an independent state, though the wider world, through the UN, refused to recognise it and condemned this separatist action. Talks have been held ever since 1974 with the mediation of the UN Secretary General for the establishment of a *united federal bizonal bicomunal* Cyprus but without any success so far.

The death of president Makarios in 1977 marked the beginning of the end of the dominance of the Church over post-independence political developments of Cyprus. Its role in the society remains very influential but as the years go by it appears to be weakened as it has withdrawn from frontline political life. Recent developments in political domain in Cyprus involve the application of the Government of Cyprus to join the European Union and the ongoing negotiations for full membership. An important recent development concerning this issue is the EU decision in the Helsinki summit that the solution of the Cyprus problem will not be a prerequisite for the entrance of Cyprus into the EU.

A.2 The economic development of Cyprus

Until the mid-twentieth century the economy of the island depended heavily on agriculture. In 1901 the agrarian population was of the order of 85 per cent of the total. Sixty years later, at the time of Independence, the agricultural population was still 60 per cent. Agriculture in the form of food and processed goods always accounted for a large percentage in all domestic exports up until 1974, the year that, following the Turkish Invasion, marked the beginning of the restructuring of the Greek Cypriot economy.

The first significant changes in the Cypriot economy and occupational structure began to appear after the First World War. The first incident that provoked this development was a mining explosion in the 1920s. Big American and British mining companies started to exploit the rich copper and asbestos deposits in the Troodos Mountains. Poor peasants from the villages gathered to work in the rich copper and asbestos mines. This was the first occupational shift that sparked the awakening of class-consciousness and the unionisation among the Cypriots. After W.W.II., economic development was accelerated. Agricultural occupations fell to 37.4 per cent in 1946, while the employee class was expanding.

Panayiotopoulos (1995) notes that for the first fifteen years of independence (1960-74) agriculture still maintained a central position in the economy. During the 1960s agriculture contributed one fifth of value added to GDP, employed one third of the labour force and was the major foreign exchange earner. During this period the rate of urbanisation reflected the centrality of the agricultural sector in the society. During the period 1946-60 the rate of population growth in urban areas was an average 4.2 per cent per year and during the period following independence (1960-74) this was halved to 2.1 per cent. The situation changed dramatically, however, after the events of 1974 when there was a radical and abrupt change in the social structure and the economy of Cyprus.

The Turkish invasion and occupation of the northern part of the island in 1974 was an event that brought about massive changes in the Greek Cypriot economy and society³. The results were devastating. Nearly 45 per cent of the entire population were forcibly displaced. Almost 70 per cent of the GDP sources were lost. These consisted of 46 per cent of the agricultural production, 65 per cent of the tourist installations, the loss of the Nicosia airport and the loss of 26 per cent of the manufacturing capacity. The unemployment rate that in 1973 stood at 1.2 per cent, in the aftermath of the 1974 events stood at 39 per cent. The unemployed consisted mostly of the rural refugees who fled to the south from the occupied part of the island. Panayiotopoulos (1995) notes that the separation of tens of thousands of peasant proprietors from their land was to be of profound significance in altering the pattern of employment and social and political organisation. Many rural refugees joined the ranks of urban self-employed, an even larger number became the wage-employed construction workers, hotel workers, sewing machinists and the other occupations that were to characterise the post-war 'economic miracle'. The events of 1974 thus accelerated the transition to *modern* social and economic structures.

The manufacturing sector began to develop in the 1930s but it never reached high levels. It marked, however, a slow move to regular wage and salaried employment. In 1961 it accounted for only 11 per cent in GDP and in 1973 it accounted for 13.5. After the Turkish invasion of 1974 there was a sudden and phenomenal demand from the Middle East for manufacturing exports. Cyprus embarked on a feverish manufacturing effort concentrating on clothing, shoe, and other leather manufactures and cement with Middle East countries being the chief export destination. Ten years after 1974 the manufacturing sector began to decline as the demand for exports had fallen and the alternative European markets proved to be far more competitive (Panayotopoulos, 1995).

The economy during the 1980s and onwards was directed towards expanding the services sector namely, tourism, professional services and financial services. The sector that blossomed and has become the pillar of the economy since, was tourism. During the 1980s tourist arrivals went up almost 5 times, tourist industry employment more than doubled while foreign exchange earnings increased so that by 1984 it almost equalled domestic goods export earnings and in 1992 they reached an amount 3 times the value of such exports.

The table below, adopted from Christodoulou (1995), presents an approximate view of the occupational differentiation over the decades. One can see the modernising patterns with

³ The figures after 1974 refer almost exclusively to Greek Cypriots.

agricultural and related workers numbers steadily declining whereas employment in other sectors and particularly that of services were steadily increasing.

Differentiation of Occupational Structures								
(% of labour force)								
Code ISCO 1960	Occupational Group	1901	1931	1946	Year 1960	1976	1985	1990/ 1991
0/1	Professional, technical and re- lated workers	0.5	0.7	3.6	4.0	8.4	9.7	20.9
2	Administrative and managerial workers	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.8	1.6	1.4	3.9
3	Clerical workers	0.5	0.9	1.6	5.7	11.4	13.4	7.1
4	Sales workers	2.0	4.0	4.7	5.4	9.0	10.0	} 16.1
5	Service workers	5.0	5.0	7.7	8.5	11.9	12.3	
6	Agricultural and related workers	67.0	53.6	44.0	40.4	24.2	6.9	6.9
8/7/09	Production and related workers	22.0	35.3	7.7	35.2	33.5	36.3	44.6

Source: Christodoulou (1995)

Table A.1: Differentiation of the occupational structures in Cyprus since 1901

A.3 The development of the socio-economic class structure in Cyprus

Throughout the millennial history of Cyprus when harsh alien rule, invasion, oppression, and exploitation was its fate the ruling classes always consisted of the occupying power, these were either Venetian, Ottomans or British. Up until 1878, the year when the crumbling Ottoman Empire sold its rights to Cyprus to the British and left, apart form the Church and those closely connected to it, there was no clear division of classes among the native population.

Under these regimes the vast majority of the native population of Cyprus occupied the lowest part of the economic and social pile (Christodoulou, 1995). Their society was flattened by exploitation, oppression and persecution and was condemned to poverty, underdevelopment and powerlessness. Under these colonial regimes a few Cypriots managed to rise above the anonymous, poverty-stricken mass and do well, mainly in the economic, but at times also in the social and political fields. Amongst these people were a few rich landowners and moneylenders who dominated mostly in the island’s rural countryside. But those people were few with very little or no political power. To the above, however, one should add the Churchmen, who managed to assert themselves as the political leaders of the Greek Cypriot community during the Ottoman rule as was mentioned in Section 3.2.2. An indigenous ruling class affiliated to the Church within the Greek Cypriots emerged during the Ottoman period. This class consisted of people such as the high ranked clergy and laypeople who were close to the Church, which during this period gained considerable political power among the Greek Cypriot population. The political power that the Church gained during the Ottoman period in Cyprus was a result of the way the Ottoman state was organised. Since one of their main concerns was the collection of taxes from the provinces they retained the only form of system that was in regular contact with its subjects. In the case of Cyprus, and in fact in the whole of the East Christian world, this was the Church⁴. It was a

⁴The privileges and rights that the Orthodox Church had under the Ottomans date from the fall of the Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 and was done to serve the interests of the Ottoman Empire

system of regulation and control that combined economic and cultural mechanisms, thus making it potentially very powerful.

During the British colonial rule and particularly through its administrative system another group began to emerge. These were the civil servants, most of them educated at the Nicosia English School (for their secondary education) and in England (for higher education). These people acquired social and political distinction rising above the rest of the native population and began to form a new elite of English-educated people who were characterised by an unsophisticated anglophilia. They retained their social status after the Independence of the country and were the basis of the new public service middle class..

The rich landowners and moneylenders who dominated the island's countryside for a long time, until the Second World War, maintained strong patron-client relationships with the poor peasantry based on money lending. Their influence and dominance gradually faded as the British successfully broke this cycle of dependency and exploitation. The relations that they created, however, appear to have created significant political implications, especially for promoting social and nationalistic aims.

If we compare the situation regarding the class structure in Cyprus at the beginning of the century with the situation today we will notice that a dramatic class differentiation and a radical change in the social stratification has taken place. The class composition at the beginning of the century as it is presented by Christodoulou (1995) could be summarised as follows:

- The overwhelming population of Cyprus (nearly 85 per cent) was rural and agrarian. As Christodoulou notes 'essentially most Cypriots are of peasant origin'.
- The most numerous class was the broad agrarian element of the population and it was by no means totally uniform. About half of those in agrarian occupations were landowners in 1901. The rest had either little or no land, being either tenants or casual or seasonal workers.
- The dominant section of the agrarian class was the larger landowners who employed labour or rented land. Some of them were also usurers.
- A section of the agrarian class (some 20 per cent) were farmers as well as artisans.
- There was no manufacturing class and the professional class was very small. The trading class was very small and composed of mixed grocery/tavern/coffee shop owners in urban centres.

One thing that must be noted is that the majority of people were self-employed. They traded their products at weekly markets and fairs. Waged employment was of a casual or irregular nature. The standard of living for the vast majority of the population was extremely low and people were living under poverty and many hardships especially when the weather conditions were not favourable when there was agricultural and general depression.

As the economy began to expand occupational shifts meant that many opportunities appeared for social mobility, for better employment and social status. However, there have been very few studies looking at how these opportunities have been distributed among the population (Attalides, 1981, Christodoulou, 1995) and so the details of social mobility patterns have not been clearly described and understood.

The situation regarding the composition of the society today in Cyprus bears little resemblance to the one a century ago. The prosperity that the island now enjoys despite the many hardships it had to go through in the political field, many of which were out of the control of the Cypriots themselves, gives the impression that Cyprus is a predominantly a middle class society. Perhaps this impression is due to the fact that today Cyprus has a high average per capital income in relation to most countries in the area. The truth is, however, that Cyprus is far from being a homogeneously middle class society. The classes are there

mostly tax collection and the handling of Christians' internal affairs. Cyprus was not an exception to this.

and their division, although not always very clear, is present. The picture of today's Cyprus in terms of sector of employment can be broadly sketched as follows⁵:

Sector of employment	%
Farming	10.7
Construction and manufacturing	24.4
Hotels, Restaurants and trade	26.2
Transport and communications	6.5
Banks, Insurance and trading business	7.9
Government, personal and social services	23.5
Other	0.8

Source: Department of Research and Statistics (1997)

Table A.2: The sector of employment of the workforce today in Cyprus

The people working in these sectors can be grouped into three categories:

1. Working classes. This group includes: i. small-scale farmers, ii. manufacturing and construction workers iii. white collar workers in shops and small businesses
2. Lower middle or intermediate class. They consist of people working in intermediate positions in public and semi public sector, technicians, small entrepreneurs
3. Middle or professional class. This group includes owners of large and medium enterprises; privileged employees usually employed in the public and semi public sectors but also in large firms, and the self-employed professionals

The distinction between these classes is very interesting for the purposes of this research because this study examines the resources that different families in this class structure have available and the strategies that they employ in their effort to offer the best possible opportunities to their offspring for their future educational and occupational outcomes.

⁵ The figures presented here come from the Department of Research and Statistics (1997) and do not match exactly those mentioned by Christodoulou (1995), due to the different classification systems that they use.

Appendix B

The Greek Cypriot family

B.1 Demographic characteristics of contemporary Greek Cypriot families

The picture of the family that is portrayed from the students’ answers in the questionnaires reveals a picture that seems to verify a notion that is widely believed in Cyprus about the institution of family. This notion maintains that family cohesion in Cyprus remains very high compared with most contemporary European societies. And this, despite the massive restructuring of the social structure as a result of the general socio-economic and political changes of the last three decades.

Of the 404 families included in the sample in just 19 (4,7%) the parents were either divorced or separated. This offers a picture of a dominant presence of a ‘traditional’ form of family where both parents cohabit with their children. It has to be acknowledged though, that the fact that both parents live together does not necessarily imply ‘quality’ familial environments for the children who grow up in such environments. These numbers, however, are indicative of two facts: (i.) the institution of marriage, at least within the age groups of 40-50 - the age range of most parents in the sample - is very stable and (ii.) the vast majority of children grow up in a family environment where both parents are present and can potentially influence the educational and occupational prospects of their children.

Family situation	N	%
a) All family members live together	318	78.7
b) Brothers or sisters studying or married	61	15.1
c) Parents divorced or separated	19	4.7
d) Father or mother passed away	5	1.2
e) Other	1	0.2
Total	404	100

Table B.1: General characteristics of the Greek Cypriot families

Another characteristic that is revealed about the size of the modern Greek Cypriot family is that a typical Cypriot family consists of four or five members. It is widely acknowledged that the size of the Cypriot family has been getting smaller since the early 20th century when it was common for the agrarian families to have large families (with 5 or 6 children). Today, most couples choose to have either two or three children. The majority of the families in the sample (73.3%) had either two (39.4%) or three (33.9%) children. The majority of the students in the sample (80.4%) were either first or second born.

Family size (No of children)	N	%
a) One	13	3.2
b) Two	159	39.4
c) Three	137	33.9
d) Four	76	18.8
e) Five or more	19	4.6
Total	404	100

Table B.2: The size of the Greek Cypriot family

As for the place of residence, 66.8 per cent of the families included in the sample resided in either the urban or suburban areas of Nicosia whereas the other 32.3 per cent resided in rural

areas. In a larger country the place of residence could have important effects on the distribution of educational opportunities (attending certain schools or private tutoring) and also on opportunities to attend cultural and other events. But if one considers the size of Cyprus, where most rural areas in the Nicosia district are within an hour's drive from the city, on a relatively good road network one should not expect the place of residence to be an obstacle to the different opportunities that are available. Furthermore, it must be noted that it is a common practice for many secondary school students, as well as adults, who reside in rural areas to commute on a daily basis to Nicosia to attend school or to get to their place of work.

Below I examine parents' education and occupation, which I compare to the education and occupation of their own fathers. This is done in an effort to demonstrate the big changes that have occurred in the general characteristics of the Cypriot family. These changes are important to note because they shape an environment where:

- a) 'New' middle classes were shaped
- b) Parents developed an educational capital that is bound to have an impact on influencing and on shaping the opportunities of their children
- c) Depending on the conditions under which some parents experienced (or did not experience) social mobility attitudes have been shaped towards
 - I. processes of social advancement and
 - II. gender roles in Cypriot society

B.2 Parent's education

Most parents in the sample graduated from secondary education. Roughly equal numbers of fathers and mothers graduated from secondary education but it must be noted that the number of fathers who got to a university is almost double that of mothers. This reveals an attitude that promotes more the education of male children than the education of female children. In order to offer a picture of the changing circumstances under which the parents obtained their education. Tables B.3 and B.4 compare the higher educational level that the parents reached in relation to the higher educational level that their own fathers reached. It can be easily seen that while the vast majority of parents' fathers attended only primary education or less, the majority of parents (both fathers and mothers) attended mostly secondary or to a lesser degree higher education. This has been the result of the expansion of the educational opportunities during the second half of the twentieth century as was described in Chapter 3.

An observation that can be made in relation to women's education is that 13.4 per cent and 17.6 per cent of the mothers of the parents (mothers and fathers) of our sample did not go to school at all, another 36.9 and 37.9 per cent attended only a few years in primary school while another 39.4 and 34.7 per cent managed to graduate from primary school. These figures reveal the consideration that was given to the education of girls during the first decades of the twentieth century when the mentality was that as soon as girls learned how to read and write their parents got them out of school to help with the housework. If these figures are compared with today's figures when roughly equal number of male and female students move to higher education (see Chapter 4), it can be concluded that there has been a radical advancement in the position of women in Cyprus in relation to the education that they receive within a time period of just two generations.

B.3 Parents' occupation

The majority of the parents were born during the early and mid 50's. Many had their formal education during the first years of Independence. Many parents experienced upward social mobility in relation to their fathers. As was shown in the previous section both parents got better education than their fathers because they took advantage of the opportunities that the

expanding educational system offered. As a result, they had better chances of social advancement in the changing occupational structure. The traditional agricultural sector began to decline and, at the same time, the manufacturing and service sectors expanded. The events of 1974 as was shown in Appendix A accelerated the process of the transformation of the agrarian economy and occupational structure.

The occupations of the parents compared with that of their own fathers is shown in Tables B.5 and B.6. It can be seen that nearly two thirds of the grandfathers were manual skilled and semi-skilled workers, full time farmers and part time farmers with other supplementary jobs. Their sons and daughters moved to better jobs. It is noteworthy that a large proportion of mothers (nearly 40%), that is women in the age range of 40-50, are not in paid employment. This is nearly half the percentage of the mothers’ own mothers where 77.5 per cent of them were not engaged in paid employment. This must be seen in the context of a patriarchal society where the prevailing attitude was that the place of a woman was in the house, raising children or helping their husband with the agrarian chores. This is something that is changing rapidly if one considers the amount of education that girls are now receiving and one may make the safe assumption that the percentage of women that will not be in paid employment from the generation graduating today from secondary education would be very low indeed mirroring the changing attitudes on the role of women in the Cypriot society.

	GRANDFATHER’S EDUCATION						
FATHER’S EDUCATION	1. No school	2. Primary school without graduating	3. Primary school	4. Gymnasium (3 years)	5. Gymnasium (6 years)	6,7. College or University	Total
1. No school							0
2. Primary school without graduating	7	9	1				17
3.Primary school	12	29	48		2		91
4. Gymnasium (3 years)	6	13	33				52
5. Gymnasium (6 years)	9	29	84	10	6		138
6. College		4	13	9	3		29
7. University		13	28	4	10	7	62
Total	34	97	207	23	21	7	389

N=389, Missing Cases* =15

Table B.3: Father’s education in relation to their own father

	GRANDFATHER'S EDUCATION						
MOTHER'S EDUCATION	1. No school	2. Primary school without graduating	3. Primary school	4. Gymnasium (3 years)	5. Gymnasium (6 years)	6,7. College or University	Total
1. No school	2						2
2. Primary school without graduating	4	7	2				13
3. Primary school	14	34	58	1	2		109
4. Gymnasium (3 years)	2	15	25				42
5. Gymnasium (6 years)	5	28	84	20	12	1	150
6. College		6	12	5	11	4	38
7. University	1	1	15	1	7	8	33
Total	28	91	196	27	32	13	387

N=387 Missing cases* = 17 (* The missing cases are due to insufficient data about grandparents' education)

Table B.4: Mother's education in relation to their own father

FATHER	GRANDFATHER										
	I.	II.	III.	IV.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	X.	XI.	Total
I. Professional self employed											16
II. Managers/owners of large/medium enterprises	1	1	2	4			1	3	5	1	13
III. Privileged employees(professionals)in public/private sectors				4	1	3	1	16	10		35
IV. Small entrepreneurs				7			1	23	8	2	41
V. Employees in the technical section				1	1		1	17	7		27
VI. Employees in sub/lower professionals section	1				4			21	10	1	37
VII. Intermediate/clerical/middle status posts				2	2	2	1	29	16	1	53
VIII. Lower white collar workers					1			7	2		10
IX. Manual skilled and semi-skilled workers				1	2			82	59	4	148
X. Full time farmers and part time farmers with other job								5	9	1	15
XI. Not working								5			5
Not specified								1	1	2	4
Total	2	1	6	21	12	5	5	209	130	13	404

Table B.5: Father’s occupation in relation to their own father

MOTHER	GRANDFATHER											Total	
	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	X.	XI.		Not specified
I. Professional self employed												1	1
II. Managers/owners of large/medium enterprises	1	2							2	1			6
III. Privileged employees(professionals)in public/private sectors	1	5	1	4	1	2	1	1	10	5		1	32
IV. Small entrepreneurs									4	2			6
V. Employees in the technical section										2			2
VI. Employees in sub/lower professionals section				2		2	1	1	19	6			31
VII. Intermediate/clerical/middle status posts	1		1	2	2	11	1	2	27	13		3	63
VIII. Lower white collar workers					1	3		3	11	2	2	6	28
IX. Manual skilled and semi-skilled workers					1			7	31	20		5	64
X. Full time farmers and part time farmers with other job										1		1	2
XI. Not working	2		3	4	1	10	1	6	74	56	1	3	161
Not specified					1	1			2	1		3	8
Total	5	7	5	12	7	29	4	20	180	109	3	23	404

Table B.6: Mother’s occupation in relation to their own father

Appendix C

Questionnaire to students that graduate secondary school

Dear student,
You have been selected to participate in a survey among students who graduate from secondary schools in Cyprus. Please, read the questions and answer carefully. It will not take you long to do so as most questions could be answered by writing a “√”. We would like to assure you that all information provided will be kept strictly **confidential**.
Thank you for your co-operation in advance.

Section A: Personal and family information

1. Sex: Male_____ Female _____
2. Indicate the area of your residence: _____
3. Does the whole family live together? (Father-Mother-Children) YES [] NO []
- Underline who is not present.*
- Why isn't he/she present? _____

4. How many brothers and sisters do you have? (Indicate yourself in the sequence. Put a B for brother and S for sister and M for you.)

1 st =	2 nd =	3 rd =	4 th =	5 th =	6 th =
-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------

5. a) How many times have you done the following in the last **two years**? (Do not include those you have done with your school.)

	Never	Once	Twice	Three times	Four times	Five times or more
a. Attended cinema movies						
b. Attended track and field events						
c. Attended football, basketball or volley- ball matches						
d. Attended classical music concerts						
e. Attended theatrical plays						
f. Visited art galleries						
g. Visited museums						
h. Attended musical concerts other than classical						
i. Attended lectures on political, social or educational issues						
j. Travelled abroad in the past three years (Where? _____)						

b)Have you taken part in any of the above **b, c, d, e, h**? YES [] NO []

Which? _____

6. From the following list check with a “√” each item that your family owns.

<input type="checkbox"/>	•Stereo	<input type="checkbox"/>	•Encyclopaedia (which one?)
<input type="checkbox"/>	•TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	•Car. If more than one, how many? _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	•Video recorder	<input type="checkbox"/>	•Piano
<input type="checkbox"/>	•Computer. Do you have Internet access? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	•Library
<input type="checkbox"/>	•CD player	<input type="checkbox"/>	•Summer house for holidays
<input type="checkbox"/>	•Video camera	<input type="checkbox"/>	•Authentic artworks
<input type="checkbox"/>	•CD records <i>Specify some:</i> _____		

7. a) How many modern Greek (or other) literature books have you read in the last two years? (*Do not include those required by school.*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	none	<input type="checkbox"/>	three	b) <u>If you did read list one or two of them:</u> _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	one	<input type="checkbox"/>	four	
<input type="checkbox"/>	two	<input type="checkbox"/>	five or more	

8. How many days a week do you read newspapers? (Not including sports newspapers)

<input type="checkbox"/>	a. none	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. three or four
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. one or two	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. five or more

9. Do you read magazines/journals? YES [] NO []

If YES, what kind of magazines? _____

Section B: Experiences in secondary school

1. Name of Secondary School: _____

2. What is your school specialisation? _____

3. a) Today, are you satisfied that you made the correct choice regarding your school specialisation?

YES [] NO []

b) If NO what could you have done? _____

4. Indicate the grade you achieved in your previous school year.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 19
<input type="checkbox"/>	18,1-19
<input type="checkbox"/>	17,1-18
<input type="checkbox"/>	16,1-17
<input type="checkbox"/>	15,1-16
<input type="checkbox"/>	14,1-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	below 14

5. a) How much time do you spend every day at home (on the average) for written school work?

<input type="checkbox"/>	a. none	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. two to three hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. less than one hour	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. more than three hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	c. one to two hours		

b) How much time do you spend every day at home (on the average) for non-written school work?

<input type="checkbox"/>	a. none	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. two to three hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. less than one hour	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. more than three hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	c. one to two hours		

6. a) Have you ever received tutorial lessons in a foreign language? YES [] NO []

b) **If YES**, for how long? _____

7. a) Have you ever received tutorial lessons not including foreign language lessons? YES [] NO []

b) **If YES**, what kind of tutorial lessons?

<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Academic subjects for preparation for the entrance examinations for the Greek Universities and the University of Cyprus. (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Academic subjects aiming to help me improve my performance in secondary school. (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	c. Academic subjects for preparation for the entrance examinations for British and American universities. (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Art, classical music, ballet(Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	e. Popular music(Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Sports, swimming, etc. (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	g. Other (Specify) _____

c) How much do these tutorial lesson cost on the whole (per month)? C£_____

d) Whose paying for these? _____

e) Whose idea was that you should take such lessons?

<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Both my parents initiated the idea	for which lessons; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Mother's idea	for which lessons; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	c. Father's idea	for which lessons; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Totally my own idea	for which lessons; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	e. Both mine and my parents' idea	for which lessons; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Someone else's(Specify) _____	for which lessons; _____

Section C: Plans when you leave secondary school

Do you plan to continue your education after high school? YES [] NO []

If YES go to section C1, in this page
or if NO go to section C2, page 6

Section C1 (Those intending to go to higher education)

1. What do you plan to study? (If you intend to seek entry to more than one fields list them in order of preference.)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

2. How long have you had these specific plans? _____

3. How confident are you that you will achieve your entrance to the above?

	Very confident	Confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident
1 st Choice				
2 nd Choice				
3 rd Choice				

4. Who influenced you in your choices?

- ☐

a. Both my parents
- ☐

b. Mother
- ☐

c. Father
- ☐

d. Totally my own idea
- ☐

e. It was a decision taken by my parents and myself
- ☐

f. Someone else (Specify) _____

5. Do your parents want you to continue your education on a different field? YES _____ NO _____

- If YES,
- a) who is it that does not agree? _____
 - b) what does he/she prefer you to study? _____
 - c) why do you think he/she has this preference? _____

6. a) Where do you **really expect** to continue you education after high school?

(Tick only one)

b) Where would you **really like** to continue your education after high school?

(Tick only one)

- ☐

Cyprus
- ☐

Greece
- ☐

Britain
- ☐

USA
- ☐

First Cyprus at a college and then abroad
- ☐

Other _____

- ☐

Cyprus
- ☐

Greece
- ☐

Britain
- ☐

USA
- ☐

First Cyprus at a college and then abroad
- ☐

Other _____

c) If you answered differently in (b) give a brief reason for this:

7. After your studies, in which job do you believe you will most probably end up?

8. Where (in what sector) to you expect to find a employment?

9. Do you expect your family to help you find employment? YES_____ NO _____

If **YES**,

a) How can they help you?

b) How confident are you that your family can help you get a job?

- a. Very confident
- b. Confident

- c. Not very confident
- d. Not at all confident

Now go to Part D on the next page(page 6)

Section C2 (Those who DO NOT intend to move into higher education)

1. What kind of job will you most likely do after graduating secondary school (or after the army for the boys)? _____

2. How confident are you that you will follow the above?

d. Not at all confident

3. How will you find a job?

4. Do you expect your family to help you find employment? YES_____ NO _____

If YES,

a) How can they help you?

b) How confident are you that your family can help you get a job?

d. Not at all confident

Now go to Part D

Section D *(To be answered by all)*

[illegible]

2. If there is anything that you wish to comment on in relation to this questionnaire please do so in the space provided below.

3. Could you please provide us with the first name of your father and/or mother (preferably your father) and a telephone number with which we could get in touch with him or her *.

Name of father/mother: _____ Tel. No.: _____

* The reason why we ask for these information is because at a later stage we would like to get in touch with a random sample of parents to talk about relevant issues. However, let me reassure you that these conversations will have **absolutely nothing to do** with the answers that you provided us. As we said earlier your answers will be kept **strictly confidential**.

Marios Vryonides
PhD student University of London- Institute of Education

Ερωτηματολόγιο που απευθύνεται σε τελειόφοιτους μαθητές της Κύπρου

Αγαπητέ/ή τελειόφοιτε/η,

Έχεις επιλεγεί για να συμμετάσχεις σε μια έρευνα ανάμεσα σε μαθητές που αποφοιτούν από σχολεία Μέσης Εκπαίδευσης της Κύπρου. Παρακαλώ αφού διαβάσεις προσεκτικά τις ερωτήσεις απάντησε. Δε θα σου πάρει πολλή ώρα αφού οι περισσότερες ερωτήσεις απαντούνται σημειώνοντας ένα “✓”. Θέλουμε να σε διαβεβαιώσουμε πως όλες οι πληροφορίες που θα μας προμηθεύσεις θα τηρηθούν απόλυτα εμπιστευτικές. Σε ευχαριστούμε εκ των προτέρων για τη συνεργασία σου.

Μέρος Α΄: Προσωπικά και οικογενειακά στοιχεία

1. Φύλο: Αγόρι_____ Κορίτσι_____
2. Σε ποια περιοχή κατοικάς; _____
3. Ζει όλη η οικογένεια σου μαζί; (Πατέρας, Μητέρα, Παιδιά) **ΝΑΙ** [] **ΟΧΙ** []
- Υπογράμμισε ποιος/α απουσιάζει.
- Γιατί δεν είναι παρόντας/ούσα; _____
4. Πόσα αδέρφια έχεις; (αδελφούς και αδελφές) *Σημείωσε και τον εαυτό σου στην σειρά βάζοντας Α για αδελφό, Κ για αδελφή και Ε για σένα.*

1ος/η =	2ος/η =	3ος/η =	4ος/η =	5ος/η =	6ος/η =
---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------

5. α) Πόσο συχνά έχεις πάει στα πιο κάτω τα τελευταία **δύο χρόνια**; (*Μην συμπεριλάβεις αυτά που έκανες με το σχολείο σου*)

	Ποτέ	Μια φορά	Δύο φορές	Τρεις φορές	Τέσσερις φορές	Πέντε ή περισσότερες
α) Σε κινηματογράφο						
β) Σε αγώνες στίβου ή γυμναστικής						
γ) Σε αγώνες ποδοσφαίρου, μπάσκετ ή βόλεϊμπολ						
δ) Σε κονσέρτα κλασσικής μουσικής						
ε) Σε θεατρικές παραστάσεις						
στ) Σε συναυλίες μουσικής εκτός κλασσικής						
ζ) Σε γκαλερί τέχνης						
η) Σε μουσεία						
θ) Παρακολούθηση διαλέξεων για πολιτικά, κοινωνικά ή εκπαιδευτικά θέματα						
ι) Ταξίδια στο εξωτερικό τα τελευταία <u>3 χρόνια</u> <i>Που; _____</i>						

- β) Έχεις πάρει μέρος σε κάποιο από τα πιο πάνω (β), (γ), (δ), (ε) ή (στ); **ΝΑΙ** [] **ΟΧΙ** []
- Αν **ΝΑΙ**, σε ποιο/α; _____

6. Από τον παρακάτω πίνακα σημείωσε με ένα “✓” όσα από τα πιο κάτω έχει η οικογένειά σου.

<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Στερεοφωνικό	<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Εγκυκλοπαίδεια ποια; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Τηλεόραση	<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Αυτοκίνητο. Αν περισσότερο από ένα, πόσα; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Βίντεο	<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Πιάνο
<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Υπολογιστή. Είστε συνδεδεμένοι με το INTERNET; _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Βιβλιοθήκη
<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ CD Στέρεο	<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Εξοχικό
<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Βιντεοκάμερα	<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Αυθεντικά έργα τέχνης
<input type="checkbox"/>	♦ Δίσκους CD <i>Ανάφερε 2-3:</i> _____		

7. α) Τα τελευταία 2 χρόνια, πόσα βιβλία ελληνικής ή/και ξένης λογοτεχνίας έχεις διαβάσει; (Μη συμπεριλάβεις αυτά που απαιτούνται από το σχολείο.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Κανένα	<input type="checkbox"/>	τρία
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ένα	<input type="checkbox"/>	τέσσερα
<input type="checkbox"/>	Δύο	<input type="checkbox"/>	πέντε ή περισσότερα

β) Αν έχεις διαβάσει γράψε ένα ή δύο τίτλους.

8. Πόσες μέρες τη βδομάδα διαβάζεις εφημερίδες; (Μη συμπεριλαμβανομένων των αθλητικών)

<input type="checkbox"/>	α. Καμία	<input type="checkbox"/>	γ. Τρεις ή τέσσερις
<input type="checkbox"/>	β. Μία ή δύο	<input type="checkbox"/>	δ. Πέντε ή περισσότερες

9. Διαβάζεις περιοδικά; ΝΑΙ [☐] ΟΧΙ [☐]

Αν ΝΑΙ, τι περιεχομένου; _____

Μέρος Β΄ Εμπειρίες από το σχολείο

1. Όνομα σχολείου: _____
2. Ποια είναι η κατεύθυνση ή ο συνδιασμός που ακολουθείς; _____
3. α) Σήμερα, είσαι ικανοποιημένος/η ότι είχες κάνει τη σωστή επιλογή σε σχέση με την κατεύθυνση που ακολουθείς; ΝΑΙ [☐] ΟΧΙ [☐]
β) Αν ΟΧΙ, τι θα προτιμούσες να είχες επιλέξει; _____

4. Ποιος ήταν ο γενικός βαθμός σου την προηγούμενη χρονιά;

<input type="checkbox"/>	Πάνω από 19
<input type="checkbox"/>	18,1-19
<input type="checkbox"/>	17,1-18
<input type="checkbox"/>	16,1-17
<input type="checkbox"/>	15,1-16
<input type="checkbox"/>	14,1-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Κάτω από 14

5. α) Πόσο χρόνο ξοδεύεις κάθε μέρα στο σπίτι για γραπτή σχολική εργασία; (περίπου)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A. Καθόλου | <input type="checkbox"/> | δ. Δύο με τρεις ώρες |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B. Λιγότερο από μία ώρα | <input type="checkbox"/> | ε. Περισσότερο από τρεις ώρες |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Γ. Μία με δύο ώρες | | |

β) Πόσο χρόνο ξοδεύεις κάθε μέρα στο σπίτι για μη-γραπτή (προφορική) σχολική εργασία; (περίπου)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A. Καθόλου | <input type="checkbox"/> | δ. Δύο με τρεις ώρες |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B. Λιγότερο από μία ώρα | <input type="checkbox"/> | ε. Περισσότερο από τρεις ώρες |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Γ. Μία με δύο ώρες | | |

6. α) Παρακολουθείς φροντιστηριακά μαθήματα για εκμάθηση ξένης γλώσσας; ΝΑΙ [] ΟΧΙ []

β) Αν ΝΑΙ, για πόσα χρόνια παρακολουθείς; _____

7. α) Παρακολουθείς άλλα φροντιστηριακά μαθήματα; ΝΑΙ [] ΟΧΙ []

β) Αν ΝΑΙ, σε τι είδους μαθήματα;

<input type="checkbox"/>	α. Μαθήματα για προετοιμασία για τις εισαγωγικές εξετάσεις για τα Ελληνικά παναπιστήμια και το Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου. <i>Ανάφερε σε ποια μαθήματα.</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	β. Μαθήματα για να με βοηθήσουν να καλυτερεύσω την επίδοσή μου στο σχολείο. <i>Ανάφερε σε ποια μαθήματα.</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	γ. Μαθήματα για προετοιμασία για τις εισαγωγικές εξετάσεις για Βρετανικά ή Αμερικάνικα πανεπιστήμια. <i>Ανάφερε για ποιές εξετάσεις.</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	δ. Μαθήματα τέχνης, κλασσικής μουσικής, κλασσικού χορού ή μπαλέτου <i>Διευκρίνισε.</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	ε. Μαθήματα χορού (π.χ. παραδοσιακών, ελληνικών κ.τ.λ.) ή λαϊκής/ελληνικής μουσικής. <i>Διευκρίνισε.</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	στ. Μαθήματα κολύμβησης, αθλητισμού, σπορ κτλ. <i>Διευκρίνισε.</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	ζ. Άλλου είδους μαθήματα. <i>Διευκρίνισε.</i> _____

γ) Πόσα στοιχίζουν συνολικά αυτά τα μαθήματα (το μήνα); £ _____

δ) Ποιος πληρώνει γι' αυτά; _____

ε) Ποιου ιδέα ήταν να παρακολουθήσεις αυτά τα μαθήματα; *Διευκρίνισε σε ποια μαθήματα αναφέρεσε*

<input type="checkbox"/>	α. Και των δύο γονιών μου	ποια μαθήματα; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	β. Της μητέρας μου	ποια μαθήματα; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	γ. Του πατέρα μου	ποια μαθήματα; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	δ. Δική μου ιδέα	ποια μαθήματα; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	ε. Τόσο δική μου όσο και των γονιών μου	ποια μαθήματα; _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	στ. Κάποιου άλλου <i>Ποιού;</i> _____	ποια μαθήματα; _____

Μέρος Γ: Σχέδια για μετά το σχολείο

Σχεδιάζεις να συνεχίσεις σπουδές μετά το σχολείο; ΝΑΙ [] ΟΧΙ []

Αν **ΝΑΙ** πήγαινε στο Μέρος Γ1, σε αυτή τη σελίδα.

Αν **ΟΧΙ** πήγαινε στο Μέρος Γ2., στη σελίδα 6

Μέρος Γ1 Να απαντήσουν μόνο όσοι σκοπεύουν να συνεχίσουν σπουδές μετά το σχολείο.

1. Τι σκοπεύεις να σπουδάσεις; (Αν έχεις περισσότερες από μια προτίμηση βάλτε με σειρά προτεραιότητας)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Πόσο καιρό είχες αυτά τα συγκεκριμένα σχέδια; _____

3. Πόσο σίγουρος/η νιώθεις ότι θα καταφέρεις να εισαχθείς στα πιο πάνω;

	Πολύ σίγουρος/η	Σίγουρος/η	Όχι πολύ σίγουρος/η	Καθόλου σίγουρος/η
1η επιλογή				
2η επιλογή				
3η επιλογή				

4. Ποιος/οι σε επηρέασε/αν σ' αυτές σου τις επιλογές; (Μπορείς να σημειώσεις περισσότερους από ένα)

☐ α. Οι καθηγητές μου

☐ β. Η μητέρα μου

☐ γ. Ο πατέρας μου

☐ δ. Δική μου ιδέα

☐ ε. Φίλοι-συμμαθητές

☐ στ. Κάποιος άλλος Ποιος; _____

5. Μήπως οι γονείς σου θα προτιμούσαν να ακολουθήσεις κάποιες άλλες σπουδές; ΝΑΙ [] ΟΧΙ []

Αν **ΝΑΙ**,

- α) ποιος/οι δε συμφωνεί/ούν; _____
- β) τι θα προτιμούσε/αν να ακολουθήσεις; _____
- γ) τι νομίζεις για την προτίμηση του/της/τους; _____

6. α) Πού πραγματικά αναμένεις να συνεχίσεις τις σπουδές σου μετά το σχολείο; β) Πού πραγματικά θα ήθελες να συνεχίσεις τις σπουδές σου μετά το σχολείο;

(Σημείωσε μόνο ένα)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Κύπρο
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ελλάδα
<input type="checkbox"/>	Βρετανία
<input type="checkbox"/>	ΗΠΑ
<input type="checkbox"/>	Πρώτα στην Κύπρο σε κολλέγιο και μετά στο εξωτερικό
<input type="checkbox"/>	Αλλού _____

(Σημείωσε μόνο ένα)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Κύπρο
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ελλάδα
<input type="checkbox"/>	Βρετανία
<input type="checkbox"/>	ΗΠΑ
<input type="checkbox"/>	Πρώτα στην Κύπρο σε κολλέγιο και μετά στο εξωτερικό
<input type="checkbox"/>	Αλλού _____

- γ) Αν έχεις απαντήσει διαφορετικά στο (β) δώσε μια σύντομη εξήγηση γι' αυτό.

7. Μετά το τέλος των σπουδών σου σε ποιο επάγγελμα πιστεύεις ότι πιθανότερο θα καταλήξεις; _____

8. Με βάση την πιο πάνω απάντησή σου, πού αναμένεις να βρεις δουλειά (σε ποιο τομέα);

9. Αναμένεις ότι η οικογένειά σου θα σε βοηθήσει στην εξεύρεση εργασίας; ΝΑΙ [] ΟΧΙ []

Αν **ΝΑΙ**,

- α) Με ποιο τρόπο θα μπορούσαν να σε βοηθήσουν;

- β) Πόσο σίγουρος/η νιώθεις ότι η οικογένειά σου μπορεί να σε βοηθήσει στην εξεύρεση εργασίας;

<input type="checkbox"/>	α. Πολύ σίγουρος/η
<input type="checkbox"/>	β. Σίγουρος/η

<input type="checkbox"/>	γ. Όχι πολύ σίγουρος/η
<input type="checkbox"/>	δ. Καθόλου σίγουρος/η

Τώρα πήγαινε στο Μέρος Δ στη σελίδα 6

Μέρος Γ2 Να απαντήσουν **μόνο** όσοι σκοπεύουν να **μην** συνεχίσουν σπουδές μετά το σχολείο.

1. Τι δουλειά θα κάνεις το πιθανότερο μετά που θα τελειώσεις το σχολείο (ή το στρατό για τα αγόρια) :

2. Πόσο σίγουρος/η νιώθεις ότι θα κάνεις την πιο πάνω εργασία;

α. Πολύ σίγουρος/η
β. Σίγουρος/η

γ. Όχι πολύ σίγουρος/η
δ. Καθόλου σίγουρος/η

3. Πού θα βρεις εργοδότηση;

4. Αναμένεις ότι η οικογένεια σου θα σε βοηθήσει στην εξεύρεση εργασίας; **ΝΑΙ** [] **ΟΧΙ** []

Αν **ΝΑΙ**,

α) Με ποιο τρόπο θα μπορούσαν να σε βοηθήσουν;

β) Πόσο σίγουρος/η νιώθεις ότι η οικογένειά σου μπορεί να σε βοηθήσει στην εξεύρεση εργασίας;

α. Πολύ σίγουρος/η
β. Σίγουρος/η

γ. Όχι πολύ σίγουρος/η
δ. Καθόλου σίγουρος/η

Τώρα πήγαινε στο Μέρος Δ

Μέρος Δ Να απαντήσουν **όλοι**

1. Πώς βρήκες αυτό το ερωτηματολόγιο; [] Ενδιαφέρον
[] Αποδεκτό
[] Ανιαρό

2. Παρακαλώ όπως μας γράψετε το μικρό όνομα του πατέρα ή/και της μητέρας σας (προτιμότερο του πατέρα) και ένα αριθμό τηλεφώνου που θα μπορούσαμε να επικοινωνήσουμε μαζί του/της*.

Όνομα πατέρα/μητέρας: _____ Τηλ.: _____

*Ο λόγος που ζητούμε αυτά τα στοιχεία είναι γιατί σε κάποιο μελλοντικό σταδιο θα θέλαμε να επικοινωνήσουμε με ένα τυχαίο δείγμα γονιών για να μιλήσουμε για συναφή θέματα που όμως **δεν θα έχουν καμία σχέση** με τις απαντήσεις που έδωσες εδώ. Όπως γράψαμε και πιο πάνω οι απαντήσεις σου θα τηρηθούν **απόλυτα εμπιστευτικές**.

Θα ήθελα να σε ευχαριστήσω και πάλι που πήρες μέρος σ' αυτή την έρευνα απαντώντας σε αυτό το ερωτηματολόγιο.

Μάριος Βρυωνίδης

Μεταπτυχιακός φοιτητής Πανεπιστήμιο Λονδίνου (Ινστιτούτο

Εκπαίδευσης)

Interview schedule

With parents of students who graduate from Secondary schools

No of interview: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

Interviewee: _____

General comments about the setting of the interview:

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to give me some of your time for this small interview. This interview will have two parts. In the first part I want us to talk about your own schooling experiences and the way you entered your current job. In the second part I would like us to talk about your children and particularly about _____ who is graduating this year from school.

Part A: Questions referring to the parent

1. What **kind** of secondary school did you attend? _____

When? Year: _____

How did you come to make your choices in secondary school?

Looking back at your schooling experience, how would you describe it? Was it pleasant, difficult, boring, OK, ...?

2. How would you characterise your performance in school?

Not good / Average / Good / V. Good / Excellent

Grade : _____

3. Where were you and your family living at the time when you were attending school?

4. How would you describe your family's financial situation at the time when you were graduating school?

Poor / Average / Good / V. Good

5. What exactly was your father's job at the time when you were a student?

How about your mother?

Father : _____ Mother : _____

6. What exactly is your job today? _____

At what age did you enter this job? _____

Did you do any other job before? _____

- 7.** What were the minimum requirements for someone to enter this job at that time?
- How did you get your qualifications? (Elaborate)
 - Were there employment opportunities available?
 - Could anybody have access to these opportunities?
 - Was there competition?
- 8.** At the time when you were seeking employment what was the general situation regarding the use of “mesa” when somebody was seeking employment?
- How important was it?
- Who could provide such “mesa”?
- How could someone benefit from it?
- What did he/she had to do?
- 9.** Were “ta mesa” necessary for your job?
- Did you make use of such ‘mesa’ at some point?
- 10.** If I were to ask you to give a definition of this phenomenon called “ta mesa”, what would you say?
- 11.** What is your opinion about the situation regarding the use of “ta mesa” today?
- How important are they for someone looking employment?
- Is it strengthening or weakening?
- Why is this happening in your opinion?

Let us talk now a little about your children.

Part B : Questions referring to the children

1.
- How many boys and girls do you have? Boys : ____ Girls: ____

- Who is the first, second, ... ?

- What is their age?

- What kind of secondary education did they receive? *(if applies)*

- What is their highest educational attainment or if they are studying now what are they studying and where? *(if applies)*

- What is their occupation, now?*(if applies)*

	AGE	SEX	SECONDARY EDUCATION	HIGHEST EDUCATION/ COUNTRY	FIELD	OCCUPATION
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

2.
- Do your children who now go to secondary school attend private lessons (frodesteria)?

What kind of frodesteria? (Foreign languages, school subjects, other).

Do you think that these lessons are necessary? Why?

From where did you get information about these lessons?

Let us talk now a little about your son/daughter who is graduating from secondary school this year..

3. What is the specialisation of your son/daughter?

Whose choice was this?

How did *you/he/she* come to make these choices?

From where did you get relevant information about the choices that had to be made at school for _____?

What do you think of the other options for secondary education?

(private education, technical/vocational, other specialisations in the Lyceum)

4. How much education do you expect your child to receive?

Will your expectations be different if _____ was a boy/girl?

How long have you had these ideas about the amount of education you expect your child to receive?

Have you made any financial preparations to finance _____ studies? (*if applies*)

5. What kind of job would you **like** _____ to have

..... when he/she finishes all his/her studies? **OR**

..... when he/she graduates secondary school?

6. Do expect to help you child find a job? In what way?

Will you be willing to make use of any social connections you may have to help your child find employment? Where?

What kind of social connections will you be mobilising?

If you do, how confident are you that you will be successful?

Will you (or did you) make use of such connection for your other children?

Would you like to add anything to what we have talked about?

Would you be interested to know the findings of my research?

Thank you very much for taking time to talk to me and for your co-operation in answering *my questions*.

Δελτίο συνέντευξης

Με γονείς μαθητών που αποφοιτούν από σχολεία Μέσης Εκπαίδευσης

Αρ. Συνέντευξης: _____

Ωρα: _____

Τόπος: _____

Ποιος/α: _____

Γενικά σχόλια για το περιβάλλον της συνέντευξης:

Εισαγωγικά σχόλια

Πρώτα θα ήθελα να σας ευχαριστήσω που δεκτήκατε να μου παραχωρήσετε λίγο από το χρόνο σας για αυτή τη μικρή συνάντηση. Αυτή η συνέντευξη θα έχει δύο μέρη. Στο πρώτο μέρος θα ήθελα να μιλήσουμε λίγο για τις δικές σας εμπειρίες από το σχολείο και το πώς μπήκατε στη σημερινή σας δουλειά. Στο δεύτερο μέρος θα ήθελα να μιλήσουμε λίγο για τα παιδιά και ειδικότερα για το παιδί σας που αποφοιτά φέτος από το σχολείο.

Μέρος Α: Ερωτήσεις που απευθύνονται στους γονείς

1. Σε τι είδος σχολείου έχετε φοιτήσει; _____
Πότε; Έτος: _____
Πως πήρατε τις αποφάσεις σας στο σχολείο; _____
Κοιτάζοντας πίσω στις σχολικές σας εμπειρίες, πως θα τις περιγράφετε; Ήταν ευχάριστες, δύσκολες, ανιαρές, εντάξει, ... ;
2. Πώς θα περίγραφες την επίδοση σου στο σχολείο;
Όχι καλή / Μέτρια / Καλή / Π.Καλή / Άριστη
Βαθμός : _____
3. Πού ζούσες εσύ και η οικογένεια σου το καιρό που φοιτούσες στο σχολείο;

4. Πώς θα περίγραφες την οικονομική κατάσταση της οικογένεια σου το καιρό που φοιτούσε στο σχολείο; (Περιγραφικά)
Φτωχή / Μέτρια / Καλή / Π. Καλή
5. Ποιο ήταν ακριβώς το επάγγελμα του πατέρα σου όταν ήσουν μαθητής;
Η μητέρα;
Πατέρας : _____ Μητέρα : _____
6. Ποιο είναι ακριβώς το επάγγελμα σου σήμερα; _____
Σε ποια ηλικία μπήκες σ' αυτή τη δουλειά; _____
Είχες κάνει καμιά άλλη δουλειά πριν; _____

- 7.** Ποια ήταν ελάχιστα προαπαιτούμενα για κάποιον που ήθελε να μπει σ' αυτή τη δουλειά;
- Πως αποκτήσατε τα “προσόντα” σας; (Παρακαλώ επεκταθείτε)
 - Υπήρχαν ευκαιρίες για εργοδότηση;
 - Μπορούσε οποιοσδήποτε να έχει πρόσβαση σε αυτές τις ευκαιρίες;
 - Υπήρχε συναγωνισμός;
- 8.** Την περίοδο που ψάχνατε εργασία ποια ήταν η γενική κατάσταση στην Κύπρο σε ότι αφορούσε τη χρήση των “μέσων” όταν κάποιος που κοίταζε για εργασία;
- Πόσο σημαντικά ήταν;
- Ποιος μπορούσε να προμηθεύσει αυτά τα “μέσα”;
- Πώς μπορούσε κάποιος να επωφεληθεί; Τι έπρεπε να κάνει;
- 9.** Ήταν τα μέσα απαραίτητα για τη δική σου δουλειά;
- Μήπως έχεις κάνει χρήση ποτέ αυτού του θεσμού σε κάποιο στάδιο;
- 10.** Αν σας ζητούσα να μου δώσετε ένα ορισμό αυτού του φαινομένου που ονομάζεται “μέσα” τι θα λέγατε;
- Λεπτομέρειες, φύλο, πολιτικά
- 11.** Ποια είναι η άποψη σας σε μόντι αφορά τη χρήση των μέσων σήμερα;
- Πόσο σημαντικά είναι για κάποιον που κοιτάζει για δουλειά σήμερα;
- Δυναμώνει ή αδυνατίζει αυτός ο θεσμός;
- Γιατί υπάρχει αυτή η κατάσταση κατά τη γνώμη σου;

Ας μιλήσουμε τώρα λίγο για τα παιδιά.

Μέρος Β΄: Ερωτήσεις που αναφέρονται στα παιδιά

1.
- Πόσα παιδιά έχετε; Αγόρια; _____ Κορίτσια; _____
- Ποιος είναι πρώτος/η, δεύτερος/η, ... κ.λπ.;
- Ποιες είναι οι ηλικίες τους;
- Σε τι είδους μέση εκπαίδευση φοιτούν / φοίτησαν / θα φοιτήσουν;
- Ποιο είναι το ψηλότερο επίπεδο που έχουν φτάσει; / Τί σπουδάζουν; Πού; / Τί επάγγελμα κάνουν;

	Ηλικία	Φύλο	Μέση Εκπαίδευση	Ψηλότερο επίπεδο εκπαίδευσης/ Χώρα	Πεδίο	Επάγγελμα
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

2.
- Τα παιδιά που πηγαίνουν τώρα στο γυμνάσιο/λύκειο παρακολουθούν φροντιστήρια;
- Τί είδους φροντιστήρια;
- Πίστευετε ότι αυτά τα μαθήματα είναι απαραίτητα; Γιατί;
- Από πού πήρατε πληροφορίες για αυτά τα μαθήματα;

Ας μιλήσουμε τώρα ειδικά για την/τον _____ που αποφοιτά φέτος από το σχολείο.

3.
- Ποια είναι η ειδικότητα του γιού/ της κόρης σου;

Ποιου ήταν αυτή η επιλογή;

Πώς και πήρατε αυτή τη απόφαση; Σήμερα είστε ικανοποιημένοι;

Από που πήρατε σχετικές πληροφορίες για τις επιλογές που κάνατε στο σχολείο για τον/την _____;

Τί νομίζετε για τις άλλες επιλογές στη μέση εκπαίδευση;

3α. Ποια είναι τα σχέδια σας για μετά το σχολείο;

Ποιου ήταν τα σχέδια αυτά; Ποιες είναι οι σκέψεις σας για το μέλλον;

4. Μέχρι ποιο επίπεδο εκπαίδευσης αναμένεις το παιδί σου να φτάσει;

Θα ήταν διαφορετικές οι προσδοκίες σου αν ήταν αγόρι/κορίτσι;

Πόσο καιρό είχες αυτές τις ιδέες για το πόση εκπαίδευση θα ήθελες το παιδί σου να πάρει;

Έχεις κάνει οποιεσδήποτε οικονομικές προετοιμασίες για χρηματοδότηση των σπουδών του/της _____;

5. Τί είδους δουλειά θα ήθελες _____ να κάνει

..... όταν τελειώσει τις σπουδές του/της; ή

..... όταν αποφοιτήσει από το σχολείο;

5Α. Πώς βλέπεις την αγορά εργασίας στην Κύπρο σήμερα για ένα νέο;

6. Αναμένεις ότι θα βοηθήσεις το παιδί σου στην εξεύρεση εργασίας; Με ποιο τρόπο;

Θα ήσουν διαθετιμένος να κάνει χρήση κάποιων γνωριμιών που μπορεί να έχεις;

Τί είδους κοινωνικές σχέσεις είναι αυτές;

Πόσο πετυχημένη νιώθεις ότι θα ήταν μια ενδεχόμενη τέτοια ενέργεια;

Θα έκανες το ίδιο για τα άλλα παιδιά;

Θα θέλατε να προσθέσετε κάτι στη συνομιλία μας;

Ευχαριστώ πολύ για το χρόνο σας και τη συνομιλία μας.

Appendix D

A brief outline of the development of an ethos for using 'social networks' to secure social profits

In this section I look at the historic roots of using social networks to get access to social goods. It is important to demonstrate this, because it will make clear the cultural climate that is present in Cyprus today which informs and influences the strategies that parents employ in an effort to maximise their children's educational and occupational prospects. I start by examining social networks based on clientelism and patronage and the way they have developed and transformed since the beginning of the British rule in Cyprus.

D1. Clientelism and patronage

The use of *mesa* can be viewed as a product of patronage and clientelistic relationships that have existed in Cyprus for a very long time. It dates back to the Ottoman period when clientelistic relationships existed between people of different social status. This is often referred to as patronage. 'Real' patronage according to Gellner (1976:3) is 'a system, a style, a moral climate ... It is an ethos: People know that it is a way of doing things.' Clientelism and patronage are two terms used to mean similar things. Gellner (1977:3) describes patronage as follows:

Patronage is asymmetrical, involving inequality of power ... it possesses a distinctive ethos; and whilst not always illegal or immoral it stands outside the officially proclaimed formal morality of the society in question.

Similarly Choisi offers a definition of clientelism (cited in Faustman, 1998) with particular reference to the case of politics in Cyprus. According to Choisi clientelism is 'a reciprocal relationship between two persons or groups of persons of different social status in a small or traditional agricultural society.' On the one side we have the patron who provides money, posts, promotions and protection to his client, while he gains power, wealth and social prestige from the client who has to support, work and vote for his patron. Favouritism, nepotism, corruption and "*rusfeti*"¹ are what characterise patron-client interaction. The client supports his patron politically in exchange for *rusfeti*.

Historically, there were many reasons that favoured the development of this kind of relationships between people. According to Gellner (1977:4) the incompletely centralised state, the defective market or the defective bureaucracy seems to favour patronage. It could be the case, however, that when a state is in the process of development and during this time remains unintelligible to a large part of the population, they would need brokers (lawyers, politicians or both) to obtain benefits. This may be the case when the state is a large or the main employer (or a prestigious employer, as in the case of Cyprus) and where the brokers such as politicians, bureaucrats and others control (or influence) access to employment.

D2. The sources of clientelism in Cyprus: The Ottoman period

The historical roots of clientelism in Cyprus lay in the period of the Ottoman rule. The way the Ottomans ruled their provinces gave rise to the economic dependency of the peasants upon moneylenders. The Ottomans chose local clergymen or laymen to administrate and manage the villages and towns for them by collecting taxes and by resolving disputes within their communities. They gave these people much authority and power to carry out their duties. This was particularly true for the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus. Part of the power that was granted to the Church was the power to allocate and collect taxes. Clerks were sent out by the Bishops to collect the money sometimes diverting money to their own

¹ *Rusfeti* comes from the Turkish word "*rusvet*" which means the favourable treatment by a ruling party of its supporters/clients in exchange for the clients' support or services.

pockets (Attalides, 1977:139). These people often became rich enough to lend money to their fellow villagers when in need in bad years and also to pay the various taxes. This ultimately increased dependency on the tax collectors themselves. This patron-client structure based on money lending according to Faustman (1998) was the main source of clientelism and became a common feature in all countries of the former Ottoman Empire, including Greece and Cyprus. Cyprus was then a traditional agricultural society whose Greek Cypriot community was dominated by a small elite of influential families and the high clergy. 'This small and closed society provided an ideal ground for patron-client relationships' (Faustman, 1998).

D3. The British era

When Cyprus was taken over by the British in 1878 after almost 300 years of Ottoman rule, economic dependency of the peasants on the few rich moneylenders was an important element of the island's social and political life. Cypriot peasants were dependent on moneylenders. Many of the peasants were often sued for their debts leading to either losing their land or imprisonment (Loizos, 1977). In the years that followed, however, this situation went through different phases. The British colonialists, through the introduction of several economic measures and sometimes for their own political reasons tried to reduce this form of dependency because this dependency was often transformed by the Greek Cypriot elite from economic to political dependency in an effort to promote anti-colonial and pro-Hellenic nationalistic ideals. Choisi (1995) mentions that the Greek Cypriot ruling class not only managed to control the election behaviour of the population through this dependency but also could effectively isolate those who refused to submit to these social power conditions.²

Apart from the above reason that made the British try to break this circle of dependency from early on, there was another reason that drove them to do so. The second reason must be attributed to their effort to transform the economic culture from a restraining situation that was holding down further development and modernisation to new forms of legal rationality, which was less personalistic. One of the first measures that the colonial government took was to reduce the frequency of imprisonment for debt. Later, however, during the 1930's they introduced other more radical measures, the most important of which was the establishment of co-operative credit societies in the villages and a co-operative central bank. These institutions helped to reduce the networks of clientelistic relationships based on money lending³ and consequently the influence of those power brokers within the Greek Cypriot community whose power was based on it.

During the British administration, an Elected Legislative Council was introduced in 1882. Election to the Legislative Council was an important means of consolidating power and prestige for a few Cypriot notables according to Loizos (1977). Many of the elected members in the Legislative Council were moneylenders, or landowners who were also moneylenders⁴ (ibid).

After the influence of the old political rulers was substantially limited due to the economic measures taken by the British, a new potential source of clientelism emerged. The constitutional system meant that political parties were beginning to form freely after 1941⁵. By this time the large electorate were no longer bound by the traditional clientelistic relationships that had become insignificant under British rule. However, despite the breaking

² For a detailed analysis on the issue of the Greek Cypriot elite- its function and legitimisation see Choisi (1995).

³ Among other measures that the British took to limit the clientelistic relationships based on money lending was the establishment on 1940 of a "Dept Settlement Board" and "Rural Debtors Courts" which enforced fairer interest rates in old debts. For a detailed analysis of clientelism under the British rule see Faustman (1998).

⁴ This is something that was noted by Governor Storrs who was in office from 1926 to 1932 in his report of the Legislative Council (Loizos, 1977:116).

⁵ After 1941 the restrictions in political liberties imposed following the 1931 uprising began to relax.

of relationships based on economic dependency the British did not appear to break the clientistic 'ethos' among those seeking favours and the perspective providers. At first the political parties had only limited power to distribute favours on an administrative level since the British controlled employment in the civil service and the state expenditure. This prevented them from creating clientelistic relationships on a large scale. They could only offer favours on a small scale at the level of municipal politics and in the case of AKEL⁶ by granting education to party members in socialist countries. The political parties became sources of new clientelistic relationships after the independence in 1960 and the restructuring of the social order that this radical change brought about in the Cypriot society.

D4. The Independence period

By the end of the British rule (1960) clientelistic structures based on money lending had faded. According to Faustmann (1998), after independence, clientelistic structures re-emerged around the new power holders, most of whom were former EOKA⁷ fighters. The way that these new structures developed is very interesting because here lie the roots of contemporary social networks and practices.

During 1955-59 the Church led an anti-colonial struggle with EOKA. During this struggle EOKA created a powerful network, which was necessary for the organisation of the struggle. These networks offered the possibility for recognition and advancement to young people, most of whom came from rural or lower middle class backgrounds. Despite the fact that the young EOKA fighters had not been part of the traditional elite, they gained political power and influence. Bourdieu (1986:footnote14) talks about the issue of membership in a national liberation movement from where members appear to be taking advantage of the redistribution of a proportion of wealth and the recovery of highly paid jobs. Also, to these potential economic profits one could add the very real and immediate profits that derive from membership (social capital) in the movement⁸.

Coleman (1988) argues that it is likely that once an organisation is brought into existence for one set of purposes, it can also aid others, thus constituting the proliferation of social capital available for use in other contexts. He illustrates the above by offering several examples of organisations set to lay claims or to serve specific purposes but later served as social capital available to individuals to serve other goals. This was evident in the case of Cyprus with the creation of the EOKA organisation. The EOKA organisation was created primarily by the Church and Greek Cypriot nationalists for an anti-colonial struggle (1955-59). The intense and tight networks and the relationships that were created, served later as available social capital to those who participated, one way or another, in the struggle. After Independence and when these people came into power under the leadership of the Greek Cypriot Archbishop, who became the first president of the newly established republic, they used the social capital that was created to secure positions for themselves and for the member of their families in the general public sector. This then strengthened the state middle class that started to form under the colonial government and which retained its position after Independence. The EOKA fighters who were actively involved in the struggle retained the title of "*agonistes*"⁹ (fighters) even after the end of the struggle and many times this title was used as a means of distinction and to provide access to certain privileges.

⁶ AKEL is the oldest political party in Cyprus. It was established in 1924 as the Communist Party Of Cyprus. After World War II it was renamed the Progressive Party of The Working People maintaining its communist character until the present time.

⁷ Ethniki Organosi Kyprion Agoniston = National Organization of Cypriot Fighters

⁸ Of course in the case of Cyprus we may assume that these profits for the EOKA members came in the end without having them initially in mind. The first goal of the EOKA movement was ENOSIS (Union of Cyprus with Greece) something which if it had been successful, would have turned Cyprus into a relatively remote province on the periphery of the Greek state.

⁹ This is a title being used even today 40 years after the end of that struggle.

After the struggle, the EOKA veterans enjoyed the support of many Greek Cypriots. According to Christodoulou (1995) the political elite that were close to the Church formed the political elite of modern times. Archbishop Makarios was elected as the first president of the Republic. Government posts and senior posts in other public and semi-public institutions went to those who were leading members of EOKA. According to Christodoulou (1995) most of them were of lower middle-class and rural backgrounds and this constituted a radical re-ordering of the social structure. In the first cabinet of 1960 and in the House of Representatives, many members were leading EOKA members (Faustman, 1998). According to Loizos, 'when Independence started EOKA became briefly an informal duplicate government, and enabled patron-client relations, as well as weaker exchanges, to take place' (1977:127). Also, it must be noted that many of the people who held influential places in the British administration inherited their posts in the new administration.

To sum up we could say that those people who found themselves in power at the time of Independence, old and new political classes used their social status and influence to gain competitive advantage. They not only helped their own families but they also established clientelistic relationships with people or groups seeking advantages and opportunities. Facets of this are of outstanding relevance and central to this thesis. This is namely, because there is today a very prevalent attitude, which regards that offering and seeking access to social networks, is an anachronistic (and thus pre-modern) procedure to promote social goals in contrast to modernist attitudes that call for meritocratic and transparent procedures.

Finally, it must be noted that different political forces dominated different sections of the Independent state. For some sectors some politicians or agents were powerful whereas in others they were powerless to intervene. This gave rise to a mentality whereby people, in order to be successful in making use of this institution and have, according to Loizos (1977:127), a 'fighting chance', had to have as many options open as possible (friends, kin, fellow-villagers, parties, trade unions, etc.) and mobilise the appropriate social networks (if they had them) in order to achieve a certain goal. Part of the success in mobilising social networks, lies in the ability of individuals to maintain various kinds of social connections. This situation cultivated an 'ethos' of 'exploiting' any available social network to achieve social goals. This is extremely relevant to this thesis as I explore the way that this 'ethos' effectively influences practices that affect the ways choices in education are made.

In the following decades, the establishment and the strengthening of the party political system offered a significant source of social capital based on party patronage. People who actively belong to and support a political party expect that if, at any point, they require the assistance of their party in promoting the interests of their family members they would get it. However, as was noted earlier apart from social relationships based on political party patronage, there is a widely held perception that middle classes families do have access to effective social networks based on 'mutual recognition and understanding' that the lower class probably do not have. These connections tend to be more effective in relation to connections based on party patronage, for example, because of the kind of reciprocities that they generate. Middle class families would more likely be in a position to 'reciprocate' a benefit that they might get from a social connection because they would more likely have the means to do so (economic, cultural and social). It is at this level that the use of '*mesa*' is particularly effective when used to advance social goals such as favourable treatment for accessing state services, or more importantly, securing the occupational prospects of family members. One may argue that the greatest advantage that they offer, however, lies in the fact that they make possible the strengthening of a particular 'habitus' that potentially facilitates social action such as decision-making in relation to future educational and occupational pursuits if one knows that one's family is well positioned to enter an 'exchange process' in an environment where such practices are widely regarded as being extremely important for social success.